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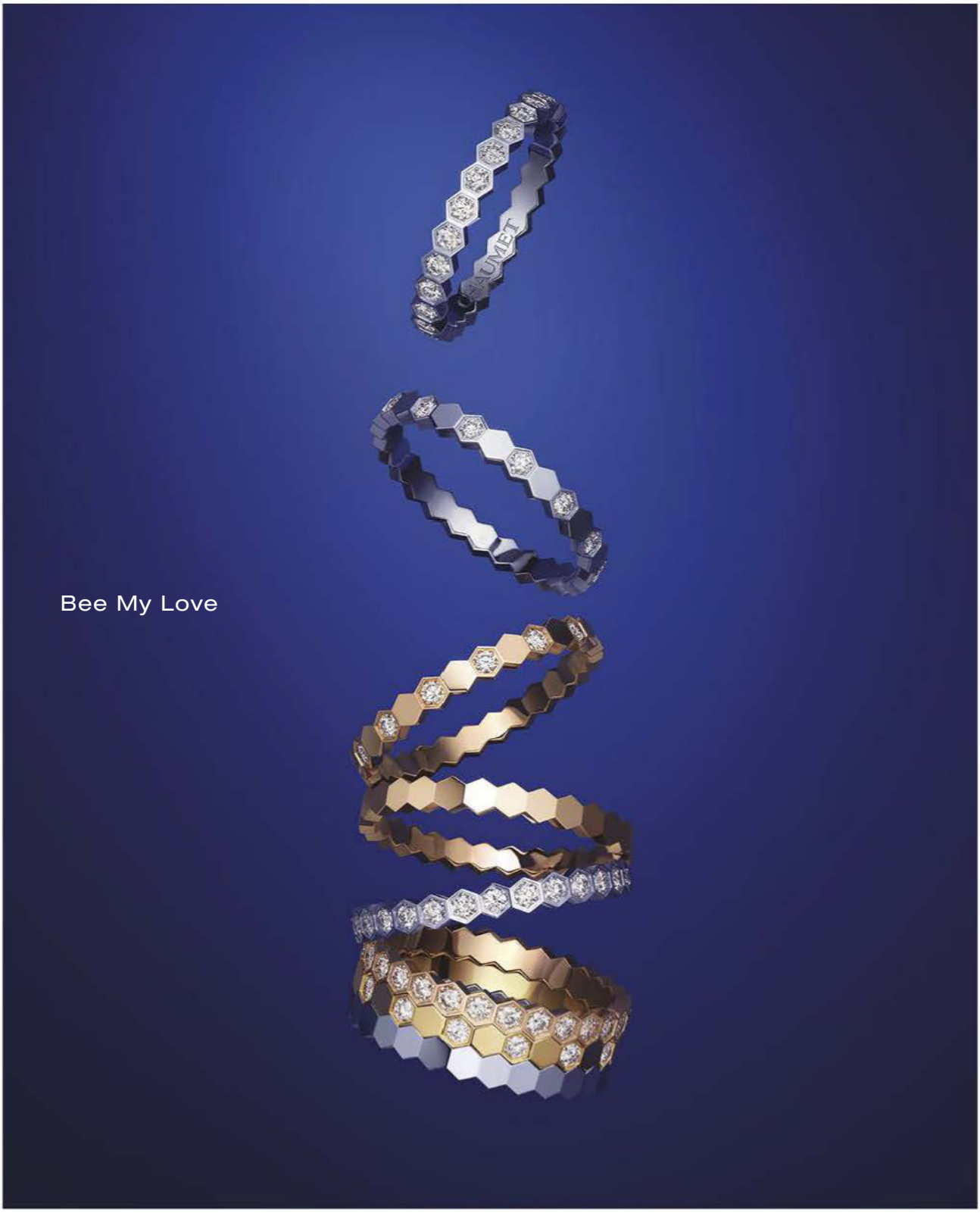

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November 2023

VOGUE AUSTRALIA

On the cover

Florence Pugh wears a LOEWE jacket. TRIANGL swim shorts. TIFFANY & CO. earrings, necklace and ring. Her own earrings, at top.

Stylist: Christine Centenera
Photographer: Lachlan Bailey
Hair: Peter Lux
Make-up: Lauren Parsons
Manicure: Sabrina Gayle
Production: Rosco

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CELEBRATE MAGNIFICENT WONDERS

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PURE CARE FOR 16H COMFORT.*
PURE COUTURE SATIN LOOK.
*CONSUMER TEST ON 300 WOMEN.

Editor's letter

The brilliant actor Florence Pugh is this month's cover star, who we chose to work with in celebration of her incredible achievements and unique style. (See page 111.)

Possessing a singular confidence, Florence is part of a generation that doesn't seem to care about the unsolicited opinions of others. Gutsy and cool, honest and down-to-earth, she is refreshingly good fun to be around.

For this shoot, I worked with Australian-born photographer Lachlan Bailey, in what was our first project together since I became editor-in-chief almost a year ago. Lachlan has always managed to capture the real spirit of whoever is in front of his lens, and his freethinking approach shines through his work.

Florence was very much a part of how the cold and wet London day unfolded, bringing her A-game and open to ideas and collaboration. As an ambassador for Tiffany & Co., she wore its new collection with much pride.

Someone who undoubtedly understands the power of gemstones is Delfina Delettrez Fendi (see page 64), the mastermind behind her family's exceptional fine jewellery. Delfina's creations for the house's first full high jewellery collection showed in July during Paris couture week, to much acclaim. Interviewed in Rome, Fendi heartland, she spoke of her commitment to the future of the maison and the incredible blueprint that her grandmother, aunts and mother, Silvia Fendi Venturini, have created before her. In their collective hands, the amazing is always possible.

Coinciding with the upcoming release of the film *Lee*, based on trailblazing photographer Lee Miller and starring Kate Winslet, Melbourne's Heide Gallery presents an exhibition of the late artist's work. *Vogue* was granted access to Miller's home in Sussex, which now serves as a museum and archive, and an interview with her son Antony Penrose. He talks to Hannah-Rose Yee about his mother's self-deprecating personality and fearless photography, particularly as a war correspondent. Read the fascinating story from page 150.

Another poignant *Vogue* story chronicles the end of an era for Vogue House, located in Hanover Square, London, since 1958, and which is now moving (see page 124). If those walls could talk … well, they do, and we were right there with the many incredible people who have appeared in our global *Vogue* world.

We often talk about grace and fearlessness as we discuss the content for upcoming issues – perhaps what we mean is self-confidence. Finding it can be hard at times as there is a wall of perceived judgement around all our choices. I hope you love the ones we made for November and find something to inspire you on these pages.

CHRISTINE CENTENERA Editor-in-chief

DARREN McDONALD

GIORGIO ARMANI
MILANO
GIORGIO ARMANI
la
Prima soft

Contributors

LACHLAN BAILEY
Although currently based between Portugal and the US, homegrown fashion photographer Lachlan Bailey joined the *Vogue* Australia team at a home near London's Hampstead Heath to capture Florence Pugh for the cover of this issue. "Not all actors love being in front of a stills camera, but Florence seemed to be very confident and at ease," says Bailey of the star, who proved both charming and self-assured on set. "I love the portrait with the big Burberry hat and how it frames her face in such a captivating way," he adds. See the full story from page 111.

ANNIE BROWN
The Australian and *Wish* magazine's style editor Annie Brown confesses she almost turned down an interview with the inimitable Fran Lebowitz – one of her dream dinner party guests – due to nerves. "I was a bit scared of her. Then I told myself, 'Don't be ridiculous, you don't turn down the chance to interview Fran Lebowitz,'" says Brown. "I'm so glad I didn't. I will treasure the 45-minute recording for the rest of my life." As well as that story, titled 'Great minds' (see page 94), Brown wrote a second piece on another topic close to her heart for this month's annual watch and jewellery special: women in the world of horology. "My favourite part was speaking to people in all facets of the watch industry," she shares of the interviews featured in 'Watch this space', from page 72.

JOSHUA BENTLEY
"I've had the privilege of working with *Vogue* on previous occasions, and each experience leaves me highly satisfied and grateful," says Sydney-based photographer Joshua Bentley. Tasked with working across the shoots featured in 'A fine thing' (see page 54) and 'Scents & sensibility' (see page 182), Bentley says he aimed to communicate a sense of luxury through each image. "If I were asked to single out a favourite, it would undoubtedly be the portraits. There's a certain magic in photographing individuals who typically shy away from the camera," he says.

ANNA GLIK
Artist Anna Glik, who splits her time between Poland and Luxembourg, created a series of collages this month each combining a number of couture looks from the new autumn/winter '23/'24 season. Her work, which can be seen in 'Grand masters', from page 42, required her to mix mediums and employ a number of different techniques. "A return to analogue collage, but with digital processing," is how Glik best describes it. "I really enjoy working with paper, arranging and creating compositions. What I like about working with paper is all the imperfections, the texture. You don't get that in any other medium."

WORDS: ANGELICA XIDIAS
PHOTOGRAPHS: ANNA BACZKOWSKA, LIZ SUNSHINE

GIORGIO ARMANI

Florence Pugh in a range of looks (seen on a model in fitting shots, below) captured in and around a London home on a wild and wet day.

House call

Actor Florence Pugh covers her first issue of *Vogue* Australia, captured in her home city by photographer Lachlan Bailey, against the backdrop of an eccentric North London home.

The weather proved a challenge on the day of Oscar-nominated actor Florence Pugh's *Vogue* Australia cover shoot, which took place in a character-filled home near London's Hampstead Heath.

"We were meant to shoot the story outside but of course, London being London it decided to bring us both wind and rain," says Australian-born photographer Lachlan Bailey, who was tasked with lensing the "charming" 27-year-old star for this issue.

"London had been experiencing magnificent weather but tragically, for the first day in a long time, it poured," adds junior fashion and market editor Harriet Crawford, who describes Pugh as funny and down-to-earth.

Thankfully, a privately owned house proved the perfect backdrop for Pugh's shoot, which saw her styled by editor-in-chief Christine Centenera in a series of dramatic looks designed to tie in with a creative concept of a candid and intimate aesthetic.

"The home was quite raw and rustic, and it felt like a lot of the original architecture had been upheld," says Crawford. "There was magnificent art adorning the walls, not to mention random scribbles that the homeowner seemed to have done, and a book collection that also hinted the person who lived there worked in fashion. It felt really special but also comforting to be shooting in a home."

WORDS: ANGELICA XIDIAS PHOTOGRAPHS: HARRIET CRAWFORD

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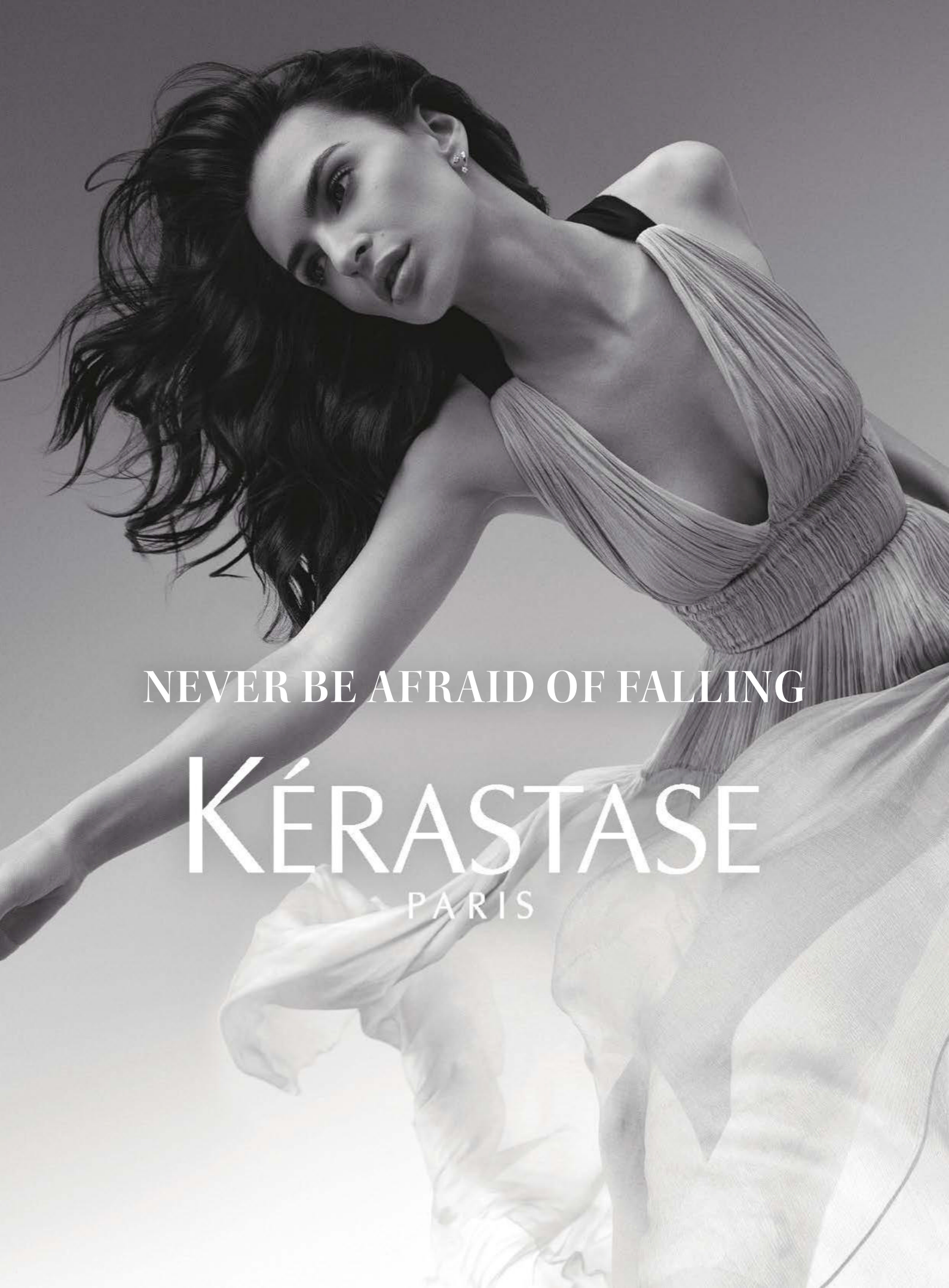
NEVER BE AFRAID OF FALLING
KÉRASTASE
PARIS

Grand masters

Couture has long sat at the apex of fashion, and for autumn/winter '23/'24, designers embraced the pedigree. This was the season to revere innovation, relish technical rigour and rejoice in unimpeded imagination. On display: the art of making clothes. By Alice Birrell.

COLLAGE ANNA GLIK

In a world of increasing homogenisation, something distinct and totally unique has become the ultimate in desirability. The couture houses of the world's elite fashion labels and the best design minds know they now have the edge: the mastery of techniques that can only be learned with a superhuman discipline, skills finessed over a lifetime, breathtaking feats of innovation and exquisite expressions of imagination that cannot be replicated.

Couture's renewed appeal is not lost on the leaders of these houses, where a reverence for, and return to, the art of making clothes permeated creations.

Inspirational jumping off points this season were often about perfecting and distilling: how to cut the perfect suit? Craft the perfect strapless column dress in purest white? The ultimate French wardrobe? From Dior to Fendi and Chanel, archetypes and ideals were pursued with uncompromising, indefatigable effort.

But it was not all about the pursuit of perfection. Uncoupled from the pressures of commercial success, imaginations let fly, innovations are made. Inside couture ateliers, the *petit mains* worktops become laboratories for ingenuity. For autumn/winter, the focus was on the end result – from Valentino to Balenciaga. Pierpaolo Piccioli commented that he didn't feel the need to show the complexities and toil that went into a look. The inside doesn't need turning out and only the maker knows how difficult it was to achieve. The viewer senses simply they're seeing something extraordinary.

The French impressionist

Chanel transpired *en plein air*, with all the magic of a happenstance Parisian vignette. In the tradition of Benjamin's *flâneur*, the audience caught a glimpse of Caroline de Maigret skirting the Seine in impeccable midnight-blue tweed, as if on her way to work. French emblems of perfect imperfection were elevated to couture heights, from the little black jacket to the wafting evening dress. Alongside lived-in hair, wicker baskets and the Eiffel Tower, they were ideals, but Chanel defines ideals. Tweed suits made precious with a shimmering skin of paillettes was pure couture, and the essence of Frenchness.

Looks from Chanel haute couture autumn/winter '23/'24.

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Christian Dior haute couture autumn/winter '23/'24.

The classicist

Elegance doesn't have to be complicated, or so expressed Maria Grazia Chiuri's monastic translation of Greek and Roman antiquity at Christian Dior. Lines – from plissé pleats to the closing caped gown – were so clean they were almost clerical. Articulated in mineral colours, her column dresses were the most precise of forms, making it obvious the painstaking pattern-making behind each. In hues you'd find in a slice of Carrara marble, she whittled her quietly powerful pieces, capturing the enduring and the steadfast, a spirit that reverberates in those eternal empires.

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Valentino haute couture autumn/winter '23/'24.

The expressionist

Valentino's Pierpaolo Piccioli walks through the world with a heightened sensitivity and a taste for emotion. He expressed it in the sweeping and the gestural, in the shadow of the 17th-century Château de Chantilly. Quoting the genius of Brâncuși, Piccioli borrowed the sculptor's resolution, rendering swathes of heavy velvet, sweeping hoods and 150 metres of white organza into triumphs of lightness and modernity. He spoke about the final product concealing effort, and so nothing was overwrought, laboured. Epic and simple, and simply moving.

Fendi haute couture autumn/winter '23/'24.

The minimalist

A minimalist's devotion to concision was melded with a jeweller's approach to creation at Fendi. That meant uncompromising and rigorous forms but softened with opulent, sumptuous drape. Creative director Kim Jones is a technical master so twisting and folding cloth in on itself made gowns that transcended any specific time period. In jewel tones – sapphire, deep ruby, black diamond – all looks were a single block of monochrome packing a potent punch of glamour but done the Italian way: understated but unmissable.

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Armani Privé haute couture autumn/winter '23/'24.

The romanticist

Carnal, mysterious. Mr. Armani was in unabashed seduction mode, using those words – or more accurately, the red rose – to describe his offering at Armani Prive. How to escape its clichéd associations, he asked himself? Sharpness of cut, geometry in three-dimensional roses applied with a touch of whimsy and a repetition of a graphic interpretation on skirts in intricate beading. A new love language to find romance in.

Balenciaga haute couture autumn/winter '23/'24.

The illusionist

Swerving clear of only looking to the past, Demna is couture's revolutionary. Having proved his esteem for the mythology of the Balenciaga couture salon, his third couture collection for the house had the path cleared for experimentation. Trompe l'oeil trickery of seasons past built to new levels. Linen canvas was handpainted (taking up to 280 hours) to look like fur, a knitted, bonded liner freezes a flowing scarf in motion, and a silver dress like a suit of armour. CAD-designed, made from resin, polished in chrome. Illusory, mind-bending virtuosity.

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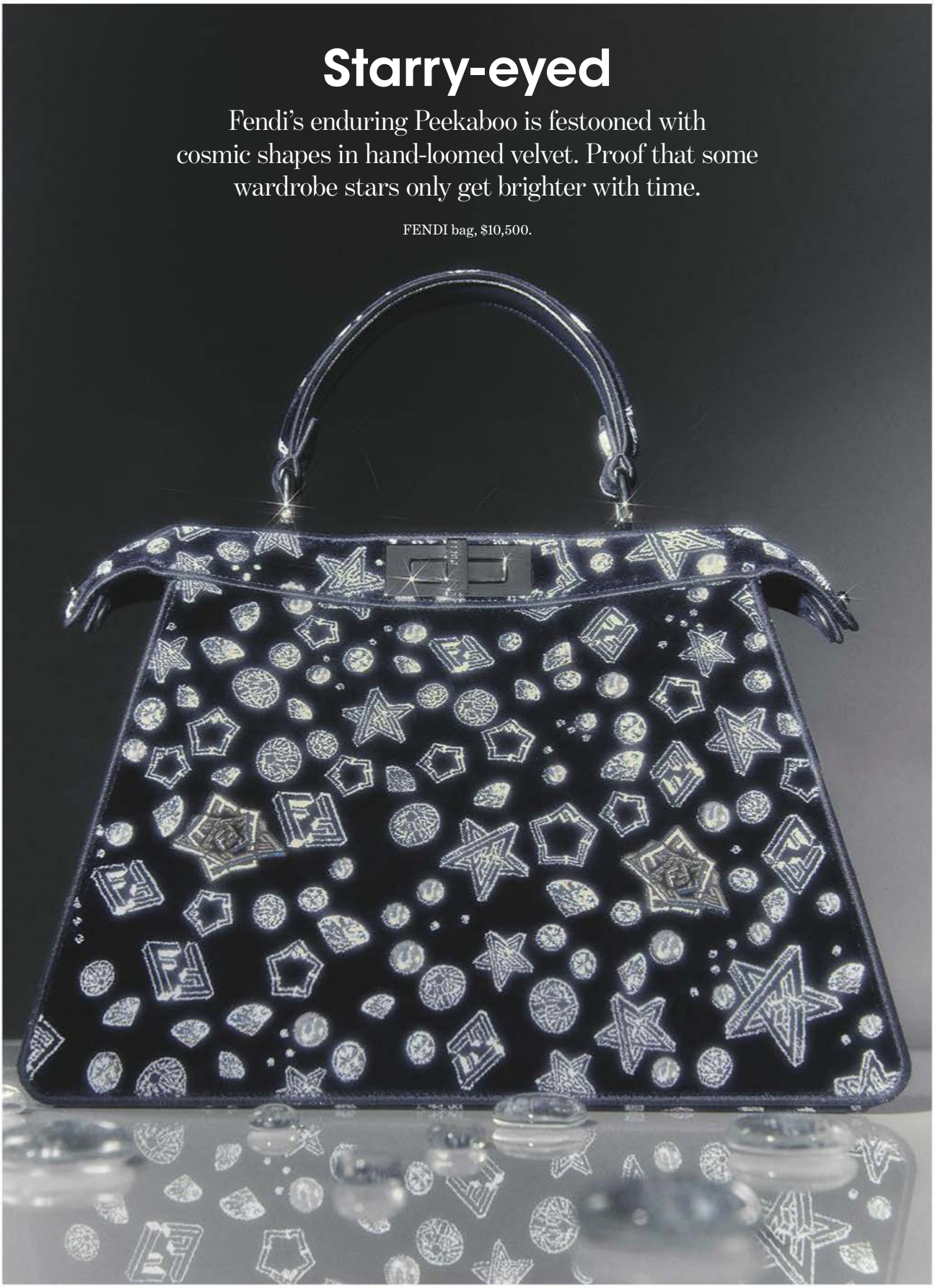
Starry-eyed

Fendi's enduring Peekaboo is festooned with cosmic shapes in hand-loomed velvet. Proof that some wardrobe stars only get brighter with time.

FENDI bag, $10,500.



ART DIRECTION ARQUETTE COOKE **STYLING** ISABELLA MAMAS
PHOTOGRAPH LAUREN BAMFORD

WORDS: JONAH WATERHOUSE
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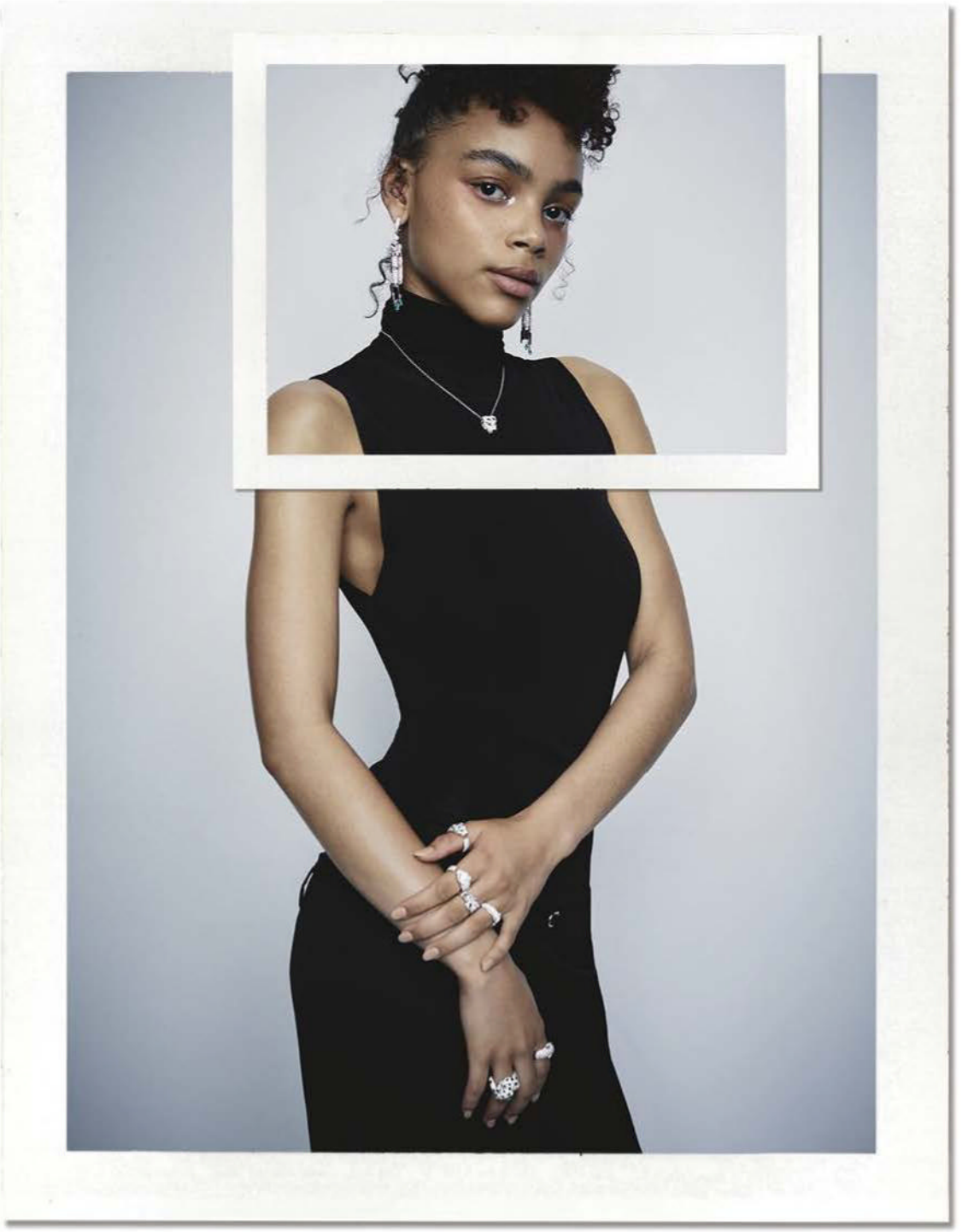
A fine thing

Today's jewellery and timepieces are more than finishing touches, becoming shining counterpoints to the best of the season.

STYLING HARRIET CRAWFORD **PHOTOGRAPHS** JOSHUA BENTLEY



ŞENER BESIM top, $350. ST. AGNI skirt, $579. CARTIER earrings, P.O.A. necklace, $43,400, and rings, on right hand, P.O.A., and $71,500, and on left hand, $26,500, $37,200, $42,200, and $74,000.

Bright night

After dark, the new minimalist eveningwear – seductively skimming the body – can only be matched by the slinkiest of jewellery as in Cartier's Panthère (at left). Wear it stacked without restraint; the clean shapes can handle the extravagance.

Right: BALENCIAGA jacket, $11,390, and pants, $3,290. FAIRFAX & ROBERTS necklace, $19,800.

Left: ARMANI jacket, $6,950, pants, $2,000, earrings, $24,500, necklace, $52,500, and ring, $13,500.

WORDS: ALICE BIRRELL HAIR: RORY RICE MAKE-UP: MOLLY WARKENTIN MODEL: MISSY LUTZE JAMES
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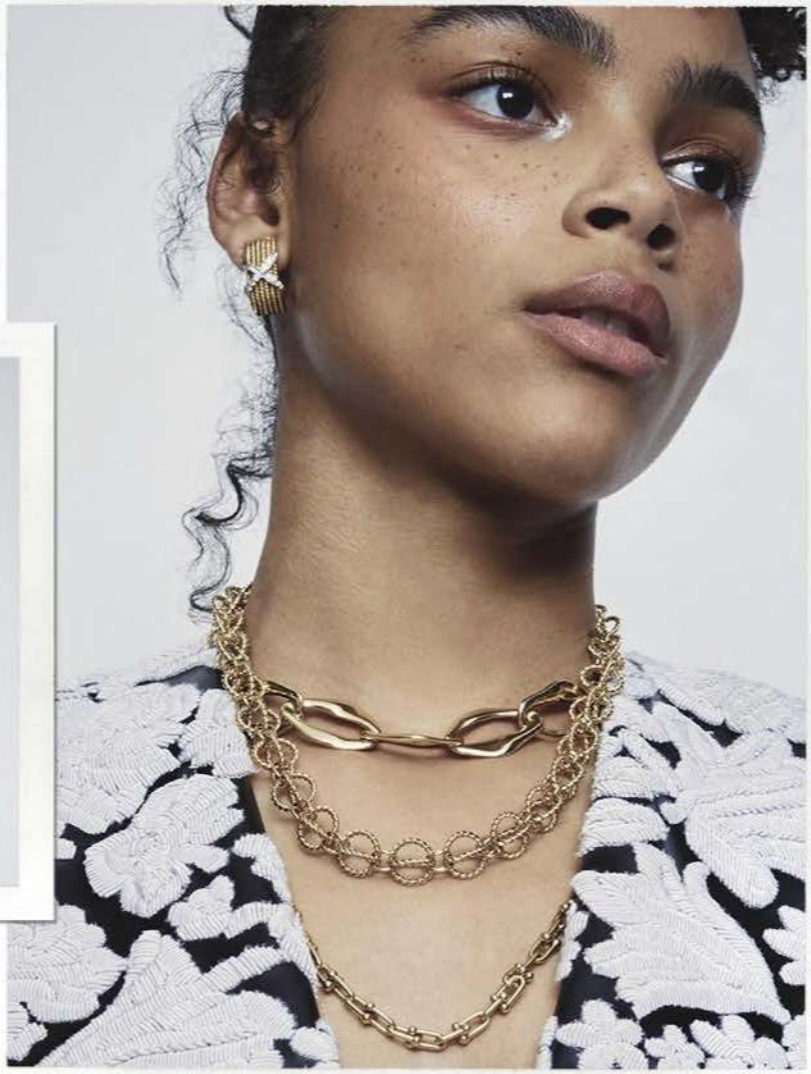
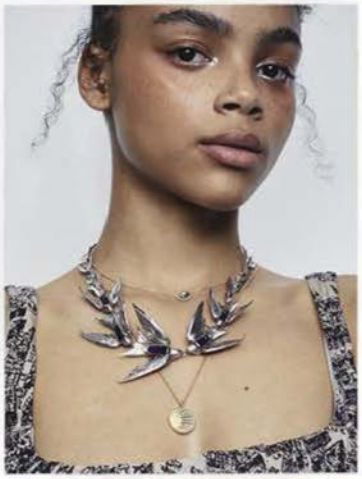


Left: SCANLAN THEODORE jacket, $950, skirt, $600, and gloves, $200. CUSHLA WHITING earrings, $590, cuff, P.O.A., and ring, $5,000. **Above**: LOUIS VUITTON dress, P.O.A. TIFFANY & CO. earrings, $21,500, and necklaces, $89,000, $41,000, and $39,000.



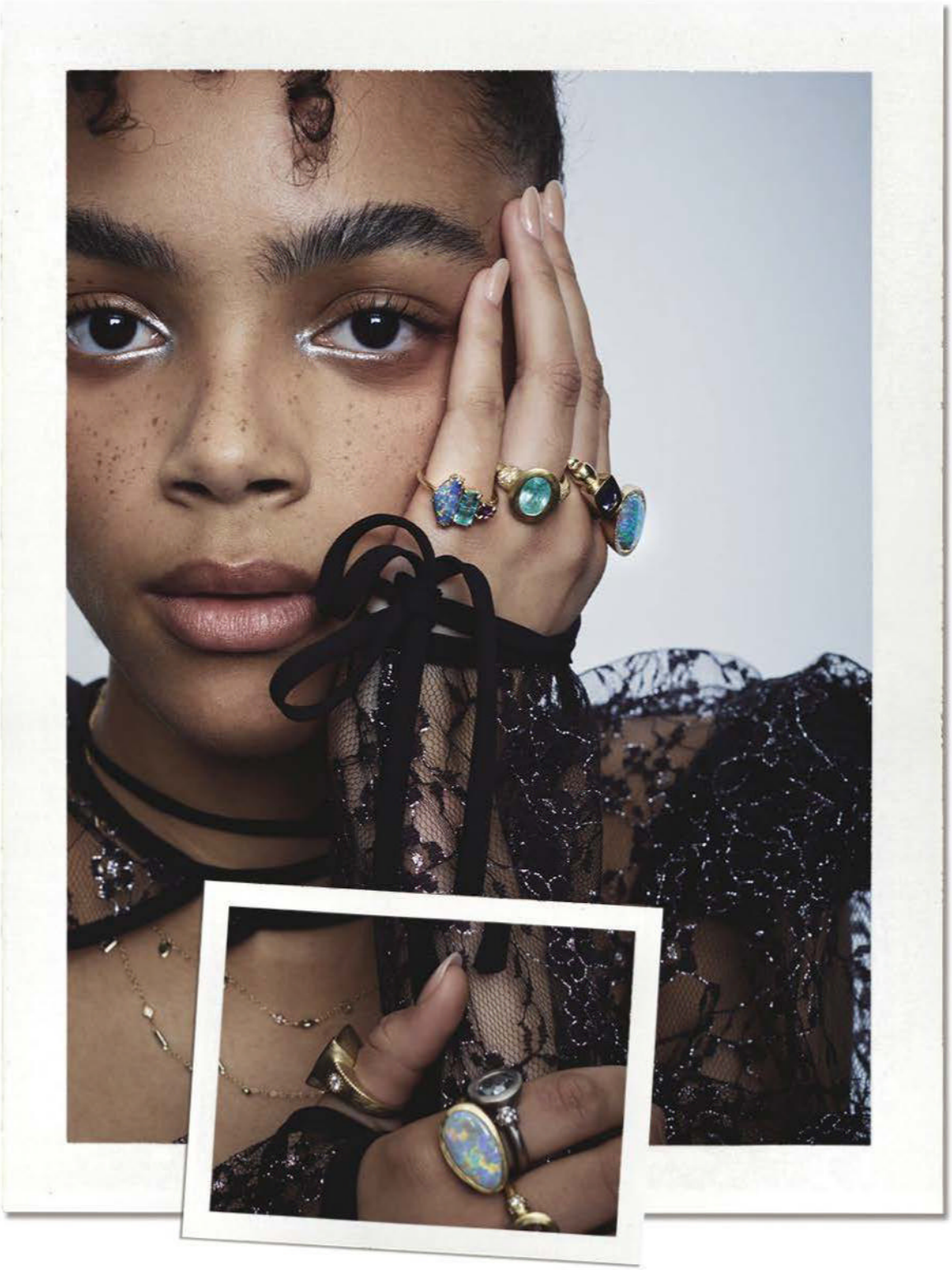
CHRISTIAN DIOR dress, $13,000. DIOR FINE JEWELLERY necklaces, $3,840, and $14,700. JORDAN ASKILL necklace (middle), P.O.A.

Worth your metal

Unabashed glamour has taken over our wardrobes and jewellery boxes. This time around though, 80s excess is tempered with modern shapes as high-shine focal points.

Colour wash

Stones with a depth of colour instantly brighten any outfit. A neutral base allows painterly palettes, like these harmonious aqueous blues, to sing. Jewellery as pure joy.



JOSHUA BENTLEY
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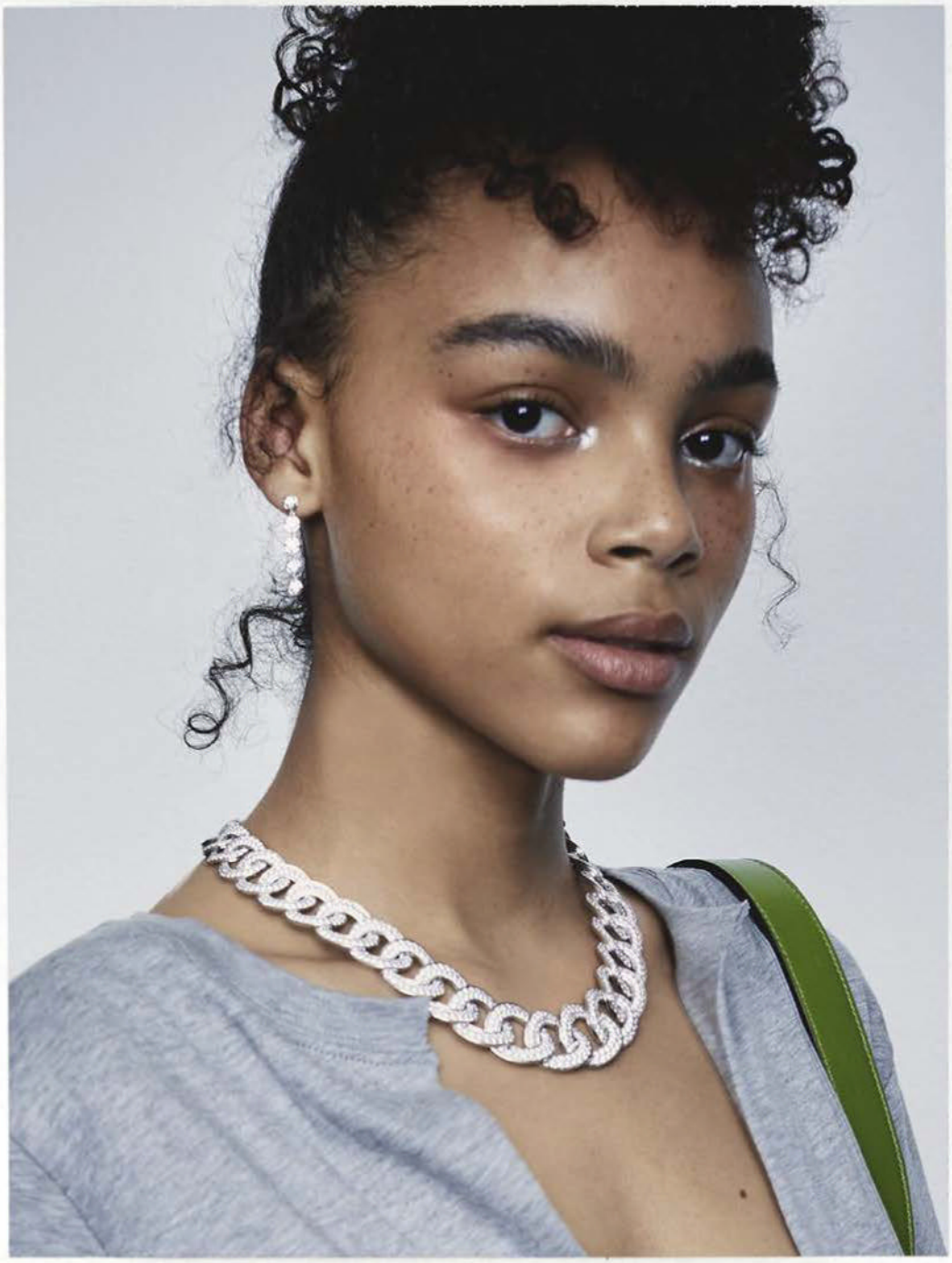
Scan the QR code to shop *Vogue's* edit of the best homegrown jewellery names.

HALUMINOUS bolero, $250, and dress, $360. MICHAEL HILL necklaces, $999 each. SARAH GARDNER rings, on right hand, middle finger, $8,950, index finger, from top, $17,950, and, $10,650, and on thumb, $24,000, and on left hand, $7,900, $13,500, $5,800, and $15,780.

Measure of contrasts

High jewellery and off-duty cool are perfect opposites. Laid-back luxe is the mood of the moment making a diamond pavé collier and T-shirt the right match-up.



GUCCI top, P.O.A., and bag, $5,325. VAN CLEEF & ARPELS earrings, $30,100, and necklace, P.O.A.

Below: CAMERON HILL dress, $580. HYDE & STONE dress, $550, worn underneath. PASPALEY earrings, $48,800, and necklace, $278,000.

Scan the QR code to shop *Vogue's* edit of the best pearl pieces.

Above: ELKA COLLECTIVE top $89. SPORTMAX pants, $5,890. BULGARI earrings, $15,600, necklace, P.O.A., bracelet, P.O.A., and ring, $24,600. BOTTEGA VENETA shoes, P.O.A.

JOSHUA BENTLEY
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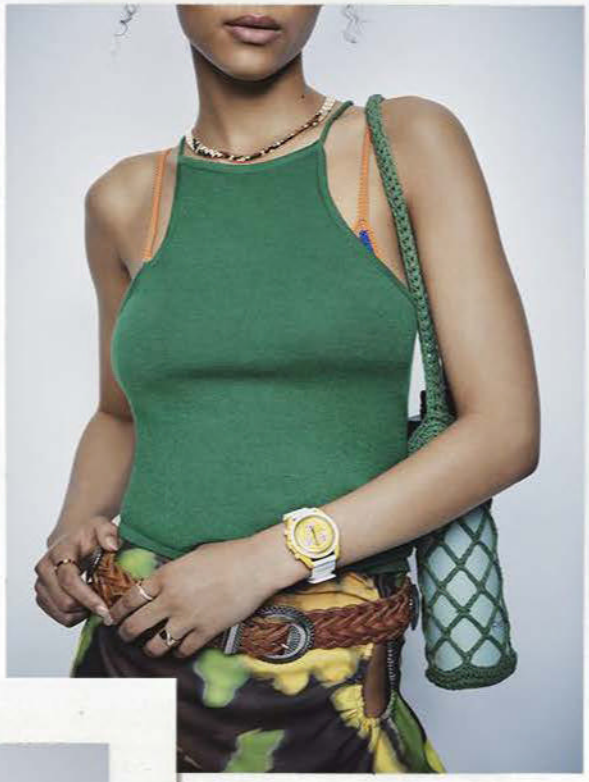
Outward bound

A must for collectors: a versatile watch with a coloured face and weightier, masculine proportions adds a sporting edge to resortwear. The utility details underscore that these are made for the great outdoors.

Right: WIXII top, $150. RUTT bikini top, $295, and bottle sling, $40. WYNN HAMLYN skirt, $460. CHAUMET necklace, $97,185, bracelet, $19,725 and rings, on right hand, $3,680, and on left hand, $6,135, and $9,095. SWATCH X OMEGA MoonSwatch watch, $415. GOLDEN GOOSE belt, $610.



Left: FERRAGAMO top, $3,050, and briefs, P.O.A. OMEGA watch, $67,075. YU MEI bag, $859. **Below**: PFEIFFER dress, $380. AJE bag, $355. BREITLING watch, $6,790. LUCY FOLK necklace, $375, bracelet, $4,500, and ring, $2,000.

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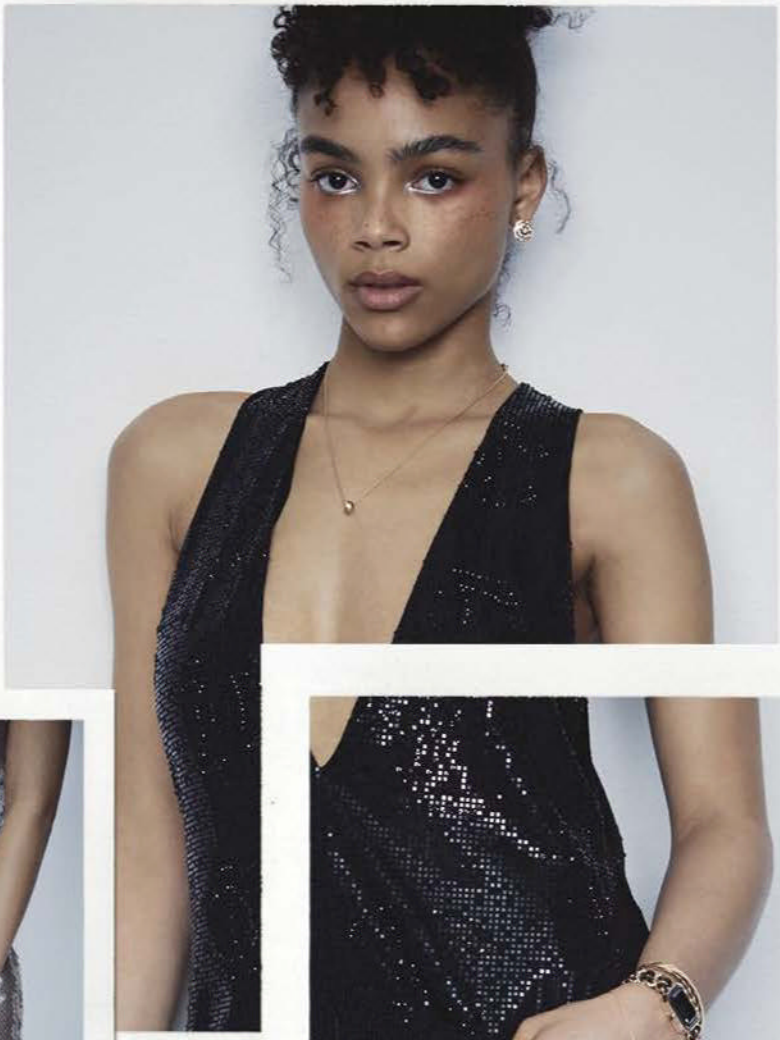

Right: CHANEL dress, $40,210, earrings, $19,300, necklace, $4,150, cuff, $13,450, watch, $9,700, bracelet, $2,750, and rings, $4,650, and $6,400, from the Chanel boutiques.

Above: PRADA dress, $8,500. LONGINES watch, $3,075. **Below**: HERMÈS dress, $9,855, and watch, $62,000.

Fine face

Borrowing from jewellery's codes, evening watches are the canvas on which horologers can flex their design finesse, and these up the ante on the elegance: bracelet straps, chains and dainty diamond-dipped padlocks inclusive.

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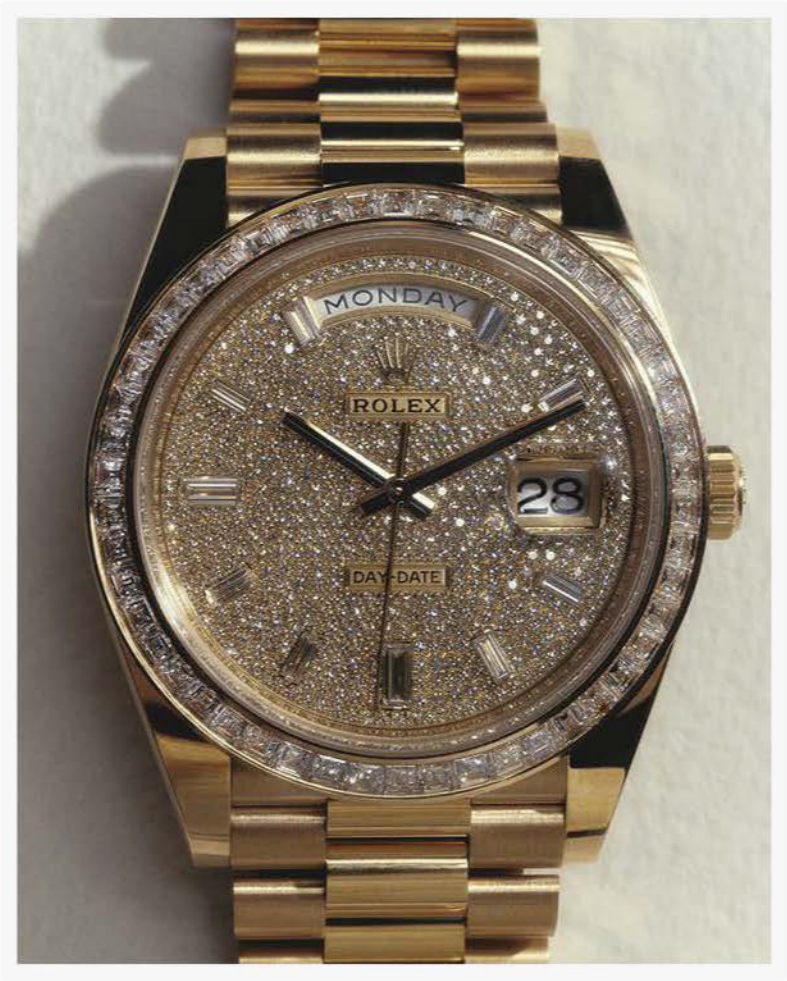
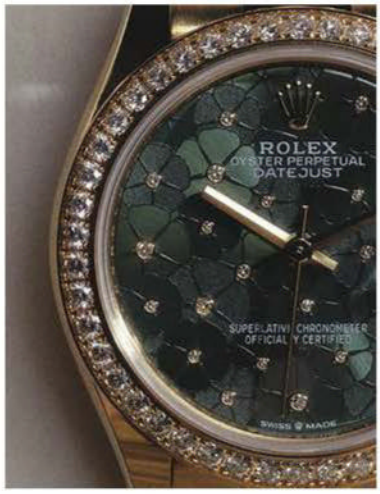


Gold standard

Instantly recognisable, bold, unmissable. Has there ever been an emphatic symbol of success quite like the gold Rolex? By Alice Birrell.

ART DIRECTION ARQUETTE COOKE
STYLING ISABELLA MAMAS **PHOTOGRAPHS** LAUREN BAMFORD



As an emblem of prestige, little else rivals a gold Rolex. "The case is carved out of a solid block of 18 karat yellow gold. That's the only way to make it strong enough, without seams, to protect to our satisfaction the 30 jewel chronometric movement," trumpeted a 1966 advertisement for the Day-Date, while proclaiming it the "Presidents' watch".

Well, Lyndon B. Johnson might have made it presidential, but Tupac, as photographed by David LaChapelle, gave it a new kind of credibility. Today, strong women like Rihanna, and Victoria Beckham give it relevancy.

One of the reasons it's so prized? House rules state the Day-Date's bracelet (also known as the Presidential bracelet) may only be made from precious metals. Its articulated links, made of three pieces, allow it to drip from the wrist. Wear it a touch oversized to give an attitude that's not precious. After all, the Swiss precision was made to be put to the hard work of timekeeping for a lifetime.

For all its brushed and high-polish surfaces – those semicircular links and gently sloping lugs are made to catch the light, not to mention this version (pictured left) smothered in an astonishment of pavé and baguette diamonds at a megawatt 40 millimetres – a Rolex is no show pony. It's highly functional, unshakeable; supporting a busy life with its gilded utility. Much consideration and precision are in its history. Launched in 1956, The Day-Date, taking its name from windows spelling out the day and the date, was the first self-winding, waterproof chronometer – watch-speak for a timepiece that will remain accurate, unaffected by changes in environment.

Its inner integrity is reflected in its heft: the physical weight on the wrist a constant reminder. It is to be worked up to – an occasion made of acquiring one – and though its history is masculine, the time is right to change that. Consider the Datejust, the other style that lays claim to being one of the brand's oldest styles. A more delicate bracelet (the Jubilee) is paired with a spectrum of colours, like this deep olive dial with intricate floral motif dial – but it's not lost any of its robustness. Because every Rolex is brassy braggadocio. It has muscled its way into the canon. The ultimate gold standard, we think.

Top and far left: ROLEX Day-Date 40 watch, P.O.A. **Left**: ROLEX Datejust 31 watch, P.O.A.

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From the heart

Delfina Delettrez Fendi is curious, thoughtful, exhilarating company and a rule-breaker – all of which she's applied to the debut of her family house's first full high jewellery offering. By Alison Veness.

STYLING HARRIET CRAWFORD **PHOTOGRAPHS** FRANCESCO BRIGIDA

Delfina Delettrez Fendi has a great sense of both excitement and responsibility in her role as Fendi's creative director of jewellery. "I am happy being able to do what I love in a maison I can still call home," she says when we meet in Rome. "Everything is extremely familiar to me, it is beautiful. It's really about adding a personal touch." Charged with bringing sparkle to a storied Italian brand, the 36-year-old conceived Fendi's first-ever full high jewellery offering in July. A monumental undertaking for any designer.

Part of her success is her synergy with Kim Jones, the British artistic director of Fendi's women's collections, with whom she shares a working relationship she describes as natural and authentic. "Kim is extremely Italian in his way of communicating," she says. "We really like to imagine together who this Fendi woman is, what she desires, where she travels, what she thinks." The two are close. Delfina is Jones's muse, a source of inspiration. "Even though Kim has very clear ideas in his head about what he wants, he presents his ideas in a sort of embryonic state. It's really when the idea begins to take shape and there is that moment where he gives a seed, that's when I understand what kind of women he wants," she reflects. "I feel this sort of adrenaline arrive, there is a passage of energy, which is beautiful. I start to imagine what I can add from my point of view. That is the moment when I say to myself, 'Yes, I think I've figured out where he wants to go.'"

The pair's design partnership is built on mutual respect and understanding. While Delfina has complete freedom, she recognises the need for constant collaboration despite their different rhythms. "He starts working on a collection five months in advance, I start working on a jewellery collection more than one year in advance, but we understand that our two universes must not be separate, because high jewellery is very close to couture," she explains.

As a fourth generation Fendi – her mother is Silvia Venturini Fendi – Delfina represents the future in this family, one driven by creative businesswomen. They are her touchstone, the DNA she has inherited.

That formidable heritage came to the fore for Fendi's first full high jewellery collection shown in July during Paris couture week. (Its debut high jewellery release in 2022 comprised a small single set.) Titled Triptych, the collection melds elements of Roman architecture and the asymmetries and surprises of the natural world and is made up of three chromatic chapters: Roma Rosa (Pink Rome), Gioiello Giallo (Yellow jewellery) and Bianco Brillante (Brilliant white). References to Fendi motifs reveal themselves throughout, from a rectangular baguette-cut stone, a nod to the Baguette bag that her mother debuted in 1997, to the double F monogram created by Karl Lagerfeld appearing on necklaces, bracelets, earrings and rings. For all the softness of Triptych's colour palette, there's modern, jagged glamour in each of the 31 pieces.

Take the Catena earrings, ring and necklace, a flourish of white diamonds and hidden-in-plain-sight FF motifs; they embody Fendi's innate energy. The Gravitis rings and earrings, heroing pale yellow or pink sapphires, capture the designer's swagger. While the Undarum bracelet and earrings with dancing FFs, and the Viridis ring studded in white diamonds with a watery apple green sapphire, are all lifelong treasures.

Perhaps what Delfina does so well is achieve that elusive frisson of desire – something inherent in her design and originality. Her pieces are both lush and collectable, →

Opposite page: Delfina Delettrez Fendi wears a FENDI dress, $7,100, earrings, $1,150, and bracelets, from top, P.O.A., and $810. **This page:** FENDI dress, $5,100, earrings, $1,150, rings, on right hand, $590, and on left hand, $410, and boots, $7,350. Her own earrings at top.

HAIR: MARCO MONTAGNOLA MAKE-UP: GIOVANNI PIRRI

"Wearing jewellery has to be an extension of oneself. You have to be able to send out messages, you have to have that sense of freedom as in fashion"

Left: FENDI coat, $16,800, shirt, $2,450, skirt, $2,980, earrings, $1,150, sunglasses, $700, bag, $8,900, rings, on right hand, $590, and on left hand, $410, and boots, $3,390. **Above and opposite page**: FENDI Triptych pieces on the couture autumn/winter '23/'24 runway.

FENDI dress, $5,300, earrings, $1,490 bag, P.O.A., ring, $510, and boots, $7,350. Her own earrings at top.

destined to be as clever and cool as she is. "Something can be successful if it can survive our time. I think when I first introduced the concept of the single earring, it was more than 10 years ago," she says, referencing her namesake Delfina Delettrez jewellery brand, launched in 2007. "It's now become a classic shape in the jewellery world. It's still one of my bestsellers."

She can pick an icon, and well she should, her mother's Fendi Baguette is, after all, part of fashion history. "I applied fashion rules to the jewellery when I started, so to me a high jewellery collection has the necessity of being presented in a fashion context. I also like to think I have helped these two worlds to reconnect. When I first began, jewellery was not sold in fashion stores and now it's such a normal thing to do, to see a bag next to a diamond."

The designer is aware she embodies a Fendi woman and spirit yet is keen to point out she is "an evolution of that woman". "Somehow my family liberated women from the heaviness of a fur coat and I like to imagine I'm here to liberate the woman from an external choice. Wearing jewellery has to be an extension of oneself. You have to be able to send out messages, you have to have that sense of freedom as in fashion."

It's clear she is inspired by the women before her, women who understand the power of communication that exists behind any accessory or any object. "I used to observe my grandmother who even today loves to play with accessories," she says of Anna Fendi, who she considers the master of accessorising. "I remember she used to wear these brooches that would also become earrings. Every time I was so seduced by this transformability of the object and how she would transform the way she would walk or sit when the object was moving on her body. I became sensitive to a woman's needs by observing their approach to jewellery."

Women have changed over the past 15 years, she notes, recognising that the concept of buying and wearing has shifted. "Before it was a kind of curse; you couldn't choose, you couldn't pick. Everything was somehow imposed by tradition that was difficult to break, and by the fact pieces were given to you by generations or just imposed by your husband," she says.

"[Kim and I] have a strong relationship based on trust, we want our two worlds to dialogue. I think the freedom and the trust I have from Kim and also from my mother is so important. I am a designer but also her daughter. The fact she completely respects my role and my vision is fantastic. Also, after only two years, we are opening a new division at Fendi for the high jewellery. [So] our Fendi motto 'nothing is impossible' is expressed at its best."

The next milestone for the Fendi family is the brand's centenary in 2025. Delfina has already started work on that collection and reveals that rather than spending time in the archives, she prefers things to come to her in a more organic way. "I don't feel the stress of having to use old codes because I think that it has to be a beautiful homage in looking back at what we have done in these 100 years, but it also has to have a distance and embody what we want to do next. It's what we do. We are putting up the codes for the next 100."

Indeed with Triptych, Delfina has drawn on and celebrated Fendi's legacy of craftsmanship and iconography, but has also created modern heirlooms and defined a new chapter for the house's high jewellery, one shaped by her exquisite artistry and acute imagination. ■

FRANCESCO BRIGIDA, GORUNWAY.COM

A matter of time

Two things led Jennifer Lawrence to her role as ambassador of elegance for Longines: a love of watches and a shared vision that style should be understated and effortless.

On her history with watches: "My first watch was a digital thing you could ask questions to; it was like a Magic 8 Ball. And then I would always set the alarm to go off in the middle of class, just for attention to disrupt class. But I got a very sentimental gift [which changed things]. When I got married to my husband, his brother gave me a watch as a welcome to the family that his father had given to him, which was just the sweetest gift I've ever received. My love of watches grew from there."

On time management: "Being on time is really important to me, especially when I'm at work. There are hundreds of people who have gotten [to set] before me, so it's always very important not to make everybody wait. When I was younger, whenever I would miss the bus, my older brother would have to drive me and that was always very scary. He would yell at me about time management and responsibility, and I just got these lectures. But he was also my hero because he was my older brother, so when he told me time management is important, I was like, 'Oh, okay.'"

On simple pleasures: "My favourite time of day now is morning, when my husband and son and I can all be together and have our coffee. I mean, he and I have coffee, not the baby – and we just watch him and laugh. [That moment] just before the day gets started."

On elegance: "Elegance to me means an understated, quiet luxury. It's an ease and a simplicity … I always think it's elegant to get ready quickly and not take too long. It's weird, but in *Eyes Wide Shut* when Nicole Kidman has her hair up, she has glasses on and then she just takes her hair down and takes her glasses off and is like, 'I'm ready.' It's just kind of this effortless beauty."

On heirloom pieces: "In my family we weren't huge heirloom keepers, but I married into a big sentimental family. I have a necklace with two dice because my husband and I play backgammon and that is obviously very sentimental."

On living in the moment: "My relationship with time has certainly changed since having a baby. You have a baby and everybody goes, 'Oh, time goes by so fast.' It was heartbreaking to hear, but it also really has helped me to be aware, even when I'm tired, to really take it in [because] I'm never going to get these moments back … I think the happiest time of your life is always just going to be when you're appreciating it and trying to be optimistic and present."

From top: HERMÈS backgammon set, $10,485; CHRISTIAN DIOR bag, $6,200; LONGINES watch $5,975.

PHOTOGRAPH: LACHLAN BAILEY INTERVIEW: JESSICA MONTAGUE
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michael hill

Elegance of empire

The grandeur of Venice and the floating city's fascinating history inform and inspire Mediterranea, Bulgari's new high jewellery and fine watch presentation.

STYLING MIGUEL URBINA TAN **PHOTOGRAPHS** PABLO ARROYO

As the powder blue sky over Venice's Grand Canal transforms into a glowing lapis with the setting sun, the Gothic masterpiece that is the Doge's Palace on Piazza San Marco comes alive with the clinking of Champagne goblets and spindly heels on 14th-century mosaic tiles. Tonight, rather than hosting a steady flow of tourists in town for the opening of the Venice Biennale, Palazzo Ducale, as the palace is also known, has become the twilight backdrop to the gala staging of Bulgari's latest high jewellery and watch collection, Mediterranea.

It's an evening for grand jewels set against a very Grand Canal where Bulgari's bijoux-adorned VIP clients mingle among a quartet of megawatt house ambassadors: Zendaya, Anne Hathaway, Priyanka Chopra Jonas and Blackpink's Lisa.

The gateway city has long been a cultural crossroads, drawing nobles and creatives alike, and this event is no exception. The truly global group gathers to watch the evening's runway showcase closed by Eva Herzigova who wears the majestic Muse of Rome necklace from Bulgari jewellery creative director Lucia Silvestri. Some five years in the making, the regal piece is centred around a 218.53-carat emerald that crowns the house's latest collection.

GUCCI jacket, $3,335, and pants, $2,410. BULGARI Pantheon Monete high jewellery rose gold earrings and necklace set with antique silver coins and diamonds, both P.O.A.

"With Mediterranea, Bulgari embarks on an epic and immersive journey that starts from Rome, the Eternal City and a permanent source of creative inspiration for Bulgari, to Venice, the major crossroad of Mediterranean influences where the Roman Byzantine Empire fused with the Western Roman Empire to give birth to inclusive and unrivalled arts and architecture," explains Jean-Christophe Babin, Bulgari chief executive.

The runway show is followed by a decadent dinner held under the gilded works of Renaissance master Paolo Veronese. The occasion is a tribute to the original journey of Bulgari's Greek founder, silversmith Sotirios Voulgaris, who went from Greece via Corfu to Cyprus, Naples and finally to Rome, leading to the founding of the Roman house in 1884.

"We thought it would be the right location to close our journey around the Mediterranean," says Silvestri, seated across town within the frescoed Palazzo Soranzo Van Axel, a stately 15th-century villa where the collection's assortment of more than 400 one-of-a-kind high jewellery and high-end watches, some 90 of which hold seven-figure price tags, are receiving visitors the following day.

"For Italians it's very important, Venice. We get inspiration from everywhere here," she adds, referring to the splendour of Palazzo Ducale alongside the Serlian tripartite windows of Venice – a key element in Palladian architecture.

These geometries can be seen in the collection's lustrous Tribute to Venice

RALPH LAUREN dress, $2,799. BULGARI The Kunzite Crown high jewellery rose gold earrings set with kunzite, morganite and diamonds, P.O.A. BULGARI Serpenti high jewellery rose gold necklace set with diamonds and rubies, P.O.A.

necklace, which features 15.36 carats of mesmerising yellow diamonds alongside cascading white diamond baguettes, creating a delicate lace filigree effect.

The kaleidoscopic collection embraces the mosaic of Mediterranean influences that have been woven into the fabric of the canal city over the centuries. As the guardian of Byzantine culture in the Western world, Venice became a key link and also a melting pot, taking in the influences of the Silk Road, the spices of North Africa and the Baroque decadence of southern Italy.

Silvestri's travel schedule seems to take in all of the above and more. Prior to Venice she was in the Middle East, Korea, India and Geneva, with an inspirational trip to Japan next on her travel card. "Actually, I miss Australia," she adds, unprompted. "The last time I was there was in 2016. We are doing very well in Australia," she smiles. Babin happily confirms that Bulgari is experiencing more than double-digit growth, primarily driven by existing clients spending more, making coveted high jewellery invitations to events such as this key to further bolstering sales.

This year Bulgari has had plenty to toast. In addition to opening its ninth hotel – Bulgari Hotel Roma opened in June – the brand is also celebrating Serpenti's 75th anniversary. The house's snake emblem, which represents wisdom, rebirth and vitality, continues to inspire the maison's entire universe. "For us, Serpenti is a metamorphosis," says Silvestri. "We like to try a new body or new head, a new tail, just to explore the creativity of Serpenti, but the challenge is to maintain the DNA of the brand. It is an icon … because of the gems, because of the design of the body, because of the craftsmanship … everybody is copying the Serpenti."

In addition to a line-up of glittering new adaptations possessing Serpenti's talismanic charm, the Mediterranea showcase also includes six one-of-a-kind top-handle Serpenti handbags featuring jewelled clasps that can be removed and worn as necklaces. The hero Baroque Serpenti necklace features two snakes fused into one and dripping with seven emerald drops. "We are very, very happy because the event is not finished yet and we have sold something like 97 per cent of Serpenti," smiles Silvestri.

Picking up the croquis of another of her articulated emerald masterpieces, the aforementioned Muse of Rome necklace with its dazzling vivid green rock, she continues: "I saw the stone more than five years ago in Jaipur for the first time. I saw it rough, so I'm very close with this stone because I followed the process from the beginning. The owner wanted to cut it into faceted stones. I did not agree, so it took a long time." In fact, half a decade for the finished gem.

Just as all Bulgari creations begin with the stones, colour is central to all of Silvestri's collections. Mediterranea is dominated by ocean hues from sea foam-coloured emeralds to inky sapphires and crystal-clear aquamarines that come together in pieces such as the Roman Esedra necklace's hexagonal pendant. The work reinforces the house's daring use of precious coloured stones that evoke *la dolce vita*.

But it's not just megawatt necklaces and coiling chokers that are the recipients of all this adornment: secret watches also push the bejewelled line between form and function. Mediterranea's

BULGARI rose and white gold Giardino Marino Grande high jewellery Secret Watch set with diamonds, emeralds, sapphires, tourmalines, tanzanites, garnets, rubellites, peridots and rock crystals, P.O.A.

Giardino Marino Piccolo timepiece is like an underwater coral garden brought to life via a magical mechanical movement and intricate gemstone artistry, including 130 carats of stones and some 3,000 hours of workmanship. Then there's its similarly encrusted relative, the Giardino Marino Grande Secret Watch set with more than 4,800 stones and with a hidden watch face so it appears like a bracelet. Adding to the surprise, a diamond starfish and shell that detach to become earrings.

Also pushing the wonder factor is an onsite NFT experience, enabling a deep dive into three of the Mediterranea collection's hero pieces thanks to the navigable 3D work of Italian visual artist Giuseppe Lo Schiavo. And of course, those who purchase the The Muse of Rome, The Southern Sapphire or The Yellow Diamond Hypnosis necklace receive a NFT designed by Lo Schiavo – another example of the new world meeting time-honoured tradition.

For guests who don't take home anything quite so exclusive though, basking in the beauty of Mediterranea and the city of Venice, so rich in history, is an extraordinary gift in itself.

HAIR: SIMONE PRUSSO. MAKE-UP: ELENA BETTANELLO. MODEL: CAMILLA GASANOVA
ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE. DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

Brynn Wallner wears a Cartier Santos Demoiselle watch.

Kate Lacey stacks a Cartier Baignoire Allongée watch.

Lacey wearing an 80s Cartier Tonneau watch.

Watch this space

The world of horology, long dominated by men, is undergoing an evolution. Annie Brown meets the female watch aficionados making this once rarefied realm appealing and accessible to more women.

A selection of Zoë Abelson's watches, from left, Patek Philippe Calatrava, Cartier Santos Octagon and Rolex Daytona with a black Tahitian mother-of-pearl dial.

Recently, Kate Lacey, a London-based independent watch specialist with almost 20 years' experience, had an epiphany at a female-led watch event. "I stood among female watch dealers, collectors, retail managers, auctioneers, senior museum curators, senior scientists, explorers, journalists, their stories all connected through watches … I feel like a few years back, there was a misconception among many women that watch collecting was such a singular nerdy subject, but if I took anything away from these events it was that watches bring together such interesting people," she says. "Consequently, I think we will see more and more female watch collectors out there in the public."

Lacey, who founded her own watch specialist company The Shrew in 2021, is one of several women shaking up the watch world, a space that once seemed overwhelmingly a boys' club with the whisky and wrist shots to match.

In recent years, this shift includes female watch specialists gaining more prominence, women holding powerful positions in the industry and the rise of social media accounts such as Dimepiece, run by New Yorker Brynn Wallner, and Girls O'Clock, launched by Trinh Trang, plus enthusiast collectives like Watch Femme, which challenge the long-held idea that women just aren't that into watches.

Wallner, whose interest was piqued while she was working in the watch department at Sotheby's auction house in New York, sees Dimepiece as linking watches with culture, celebrity and style. She often posts pictures of celebrities with details of their watches. Creating a resource for women to learn more about watches in a non-intimidating

way and show that there is more than one way to love watches is another driver. "I think one of the misconceptions about the watch world is that nobody knows everything," she laughs. "We might not know as much as the premier watch scholar knows, but even those guys will be the first to tell you that they learn something new every day. My focus has never been on nailing the reference numbers every time … I've learned so much, but ultimately, I'm into what I'm into, so I'll just never be that 'watch guy'."

In September, Wallner, who works with the vintage watch specialist Foundwell in sourcing and selling watches on her Dimepiece website, curated a collection of vintage timepieces for Dover Street Market. In the same month she was also invited to be on the jury of the prestigious Grand Prix d'Horlogerie de Genève, which awards the best timepieces of the year. On Instagram she described it as "effectively the watch Oscars".

She thinks her approach resonates with women because she puts watches into context so it makes sense as a serious investment. "For us to get into watches it can't just be an isolated photo of a watch because you can't even put yourself in that picture. Nothing fires off in your brain … whereas if you see Elle Macpherson swimming in a Rolex Submariner, you're like, 'She's swimming and she's a babe. This is total 90s – the big watch, it's so cool. I get it now.'"

Context is something Malaika Crawford understands. Hired in 2022 as the first-ever fashion editor of watch industry online publication *Hodinkee* – an appointment that, as Wallner points out, would have seemed unfathomable a few years ago – she finds it frustrating that so much of the content produced by the watch industry is still skewed towards men. "I usually write with the hope that there are other women like myself out there who just want to be spoken to in a natural and non-patronising way … I also think that it's okay to create content which skews slightly more feminine; it doesn't make it any less serious, it's just different," she says. "I like to think that my writing is fluid in the sense that speaking about fashion and art and celebrity culture in relation to watches appeals to those who are curious about the world and not just watches."

Leigh Safar, global head of important watch collections at Sotheby's New York, says she doesn't think there are substantially more female watch dealers and collectors now, it's just that they're finally being taken seriously. "I think their voices have been amplified dramatically. Women have been collecting for many years, but I think they are first now being taken way more seriously, not only in the secondary market but amongst the retailers as well. With the increased presence of social media, we are seeing women really hold their own in the space," she says.

Zoë Abelson agrees. She worked in the vintage watch market for 12 years before starting her own watch specialist company Graal, and now has around 25k followers on her @watchgirloffduty Instagram account. "The biggest shifts I've observed around the watch industry's approach to women have been just in the last few years, really," she says. "It's taken a long time to see brands put effort into understanding the female watch-collecting market, besides just assuming women want smaller watches with diamonds and feminine colours."

> "It's taken a long time to see brands put effort into understanding the female watch-collecting market"

Malaika Crawford in a Rolex Day-Date with Burlwood dial.

AVA VAN OSDOL

It certainly behoves the watch industry to take note. Allied Market Research found that the women's watch segment is expected to reach US$26.7 million by 2027, up from US$23.7 million in 2019. It's not only that women are buying more watches, they're interested in different kinds of watches, and, notes Lacey, women have more watches in rotation now, too.

Another thing, in 2023, how do you define what a women's watch is anyway? A move towards genderless watches has been a key shift in the watch world. Many brands no longer distinguish between women's and men's watches. A clear trend in 2023 has been a move toward smaller watch sizes for everyone.

Just as Timothée Chalamet might wear a tiny Cartier Panthère watch, brands known for more hefty or "masculine" watches such as Hublot have also experienced growth in female customers. Hublot chief executive Ricardo Guadalupe says the brand – famed for its brawny Big Bang watches that go up to a 48-millimetre dial – has grown its female audience to 30 per cent from 24 per cent in the past five years. This year it launched a 32-millimetre version of its Spirit of Big Bang set with diamonds, a piece Guadalupe says many female customers had been requesting.

He adds that while some women want a smaller dial, the shift toward genderless watches has created more options. "What has changed over the years is that as watches have become more unisex, women are also wearing bigger sizes like 40 millimetres and 42 millimetres."

Meanwhile, Audemars Piguet, which earlier this year announced long-time chief executive François-Henry Bennahmias would be replaced by Swiss-Italian beauty executive Ilaria Resta, has noticed women's growing interest in complicated pieces.

"Gradually, we are seeing a small but steady upward trend of female Audemars Piguet clients buying into complication pieces in our local Southeast Asia region," says Stefanie Ng, chief executive of Audemars Piguet Southeast Asia. "What used to be just an accessory for women, we are seeing this budding number of females becoming more technicalities-savvy and they appreciate an Audemars Piguet timepiece for the mechanisms and movement on top of simply just aesthetics." Audemars Piguet has engaged with its female customers in other ways, including its collaboration with the Italian jeweller Carolina Bucci.

It's something Crawford hopes to see more of from other brands. "It's okay to talk about women having different needs, tastes and preferences from men. Of course watches are unisex, but I do not think eradicating differences makes things any better for the female consumer. Most women appreciate being spoken to directly if it is considered," she says.

Lacey believes the industry has undergone positive change overall. "I don't think the boys' club has been entirely broken down," she says, "but I think the industry is changing. I'm no longer just asked about women's watches all the time. I feel like it has taken some people some convincing, however."

SMACK *Speculum* 2019 (detail). Courtesy of the artists and Colección SOLO, Madrid © SMACK

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Life aquatic

Tiffany's newest high jewellery offering is awash with oceanic motifs and the influential spirit of a house great. By Alice Birrell.

Contemplating a rockpool is not unlike spotting treasure: mollusc shells exposed by the tide glint like glossy cabochons in the sun, a starfish bursts forth alongside the hypnotically swaying colour of a sea anemone.

It's something not unnoticed by Tiffany & Co., both by its late treasured creative visionary Jean Schlumberger, and in its newest Blue Book collection of high jewellery.

The legacy of Schlumberger, who was obsessive about capturing the ephemeral and grand beauty of nature, has been updated with a looser, modern élan for 2023, thanks in no small part to Tiffany & Co. chief artistic officer Nathalie Verdeille, making her high jewellery debut for the house.

Chief gemologist Victoria Reynolds describes Verdeille as a "genius in her design" who views Schlumberger's legacy as a palace, with their job to throw open the windows. "It's a wonderful analogy of really what we're doing; being inspired by the exceptional work and the designs of Jean Schlumberger but having a new twist."

Here it comes via fluid motion, like the flick of a fish's tail, in gold and platinum, with peach padparadscha sapphire scales, for a brooch – unmistakably Schlumberger but with renewed lightness. Elsewhere an urchin's spikes become hand-carved chalcedony; a starfish, recast in diamond, with a velvety teal cuprian elbaite tourmaline at its heart.

One of the most spectacular examples is an anemone transformed via Tiffany & Co.'s innovative savoir faire. "Inverted settings lend a spiky texture," says Reynolds, pointing to diamonds that are flipped so their culets, or points, are faced outward, then set *en tremblant* to mimic the creature's texture.

It all begins with the colour palette, in this case one that is aquatically inspired and which Verdeille tasked Reynolds to source in stone. She scoured the globe for exceptional gems, a constant in Tiffany's legacy.

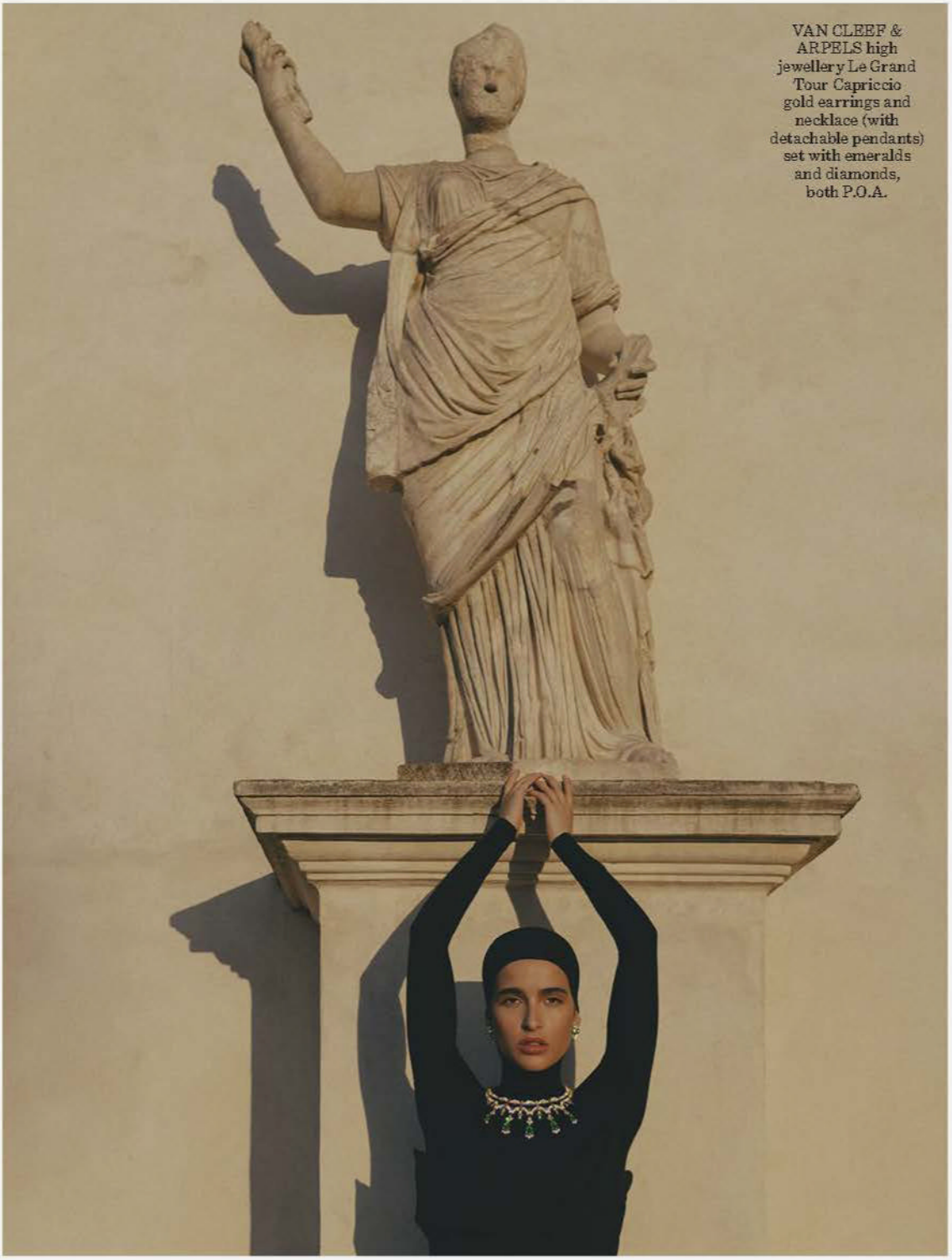
"At the root of the house, its true north, is finding extraordinary diamonds, but also coloured gemstones," says Reynolds, who creates unusual pairings like the soft coral pink of rare padparadscha and the sunny yellow glow of Umba sapphires.

Reynolds, who has worked on her fair share of such collections during her more than three decades at the storied jeweller, says it is the thought of the eventual wearer that really drives her.

"The wonderful part about what I can do is continue to surprise and delight," she says of the Tiffany customer. "I'm always out there looking for something that they may have never seen." Like a cushion-cut purple sapphire perched on diamond branching coral. In such an intense shade of violet, it's though it's seen through the waves at the bottom of the ocean … like buried treasure.

TIFFANY & CO. Blue Book 2023 white gold necklace set with tanzanites, hand-carved chalcedony and diamonds, P.O.A.

RYAN JENQ
ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB



VAN CLEEF & ARPELS high jewellery Le Grand Tour Capriccio gold earrings and necklace (with detachable pendants) set with emeralds and diamonds, both P.O.A.

High places

Storied French jeweller Van Cleef & Arpels used the majesty and might of Rome as the backdrop to its newest collection, underscoring our seemingly unending love affair with the most precious of pieces. By Edwina McCann.

The launch in Rome of the latest high jewellery collection by Van Cleef & Arpels, during which the house's wealthiest clients were treated to days of rarified experiences, lavish entertainment and Michelin-cheffed meals, can quite reasonably be compared to the indulgent Grand Tours taken by European aristocrats between the 16th and 19th centuries. This rite of passage taken by artists and intellectuals undertook these expeditions to broaden their minds and immerse themselves in the culture and arts of Europe. And it is these voyages that were the inspiration for the jewellery maison's new 70-strong collection of extraordinary and versatile one-off pieces made of precious stones and gems fittingly titled, Le Grand Tour.

The event was staged over four days during which guests joined educational tours of Roman artefacts and private palaces and experienced the best the region had to offer. On the penultimate evening, they dined at the elegant Mirabelle restaurant in Hotel Splendide Royal overlooking the gardens of Villa Medici set up for the black-tie official launch the following night. Such is the appetite of the clients on tour, many of the pieces are pre-sold. Hundreds and thousands of dollars – even millions – are committed to exclusive pieces after viewing nothing more than early sketches.

The trust between the house of Van Cleef & Arpels and its clients runs deep. Past patrons have included Elizabeth Taylor, Princess Faiza of Egypt, Wallis Simpson and Grace Kelly, whose first gift from her future husband Prince Rainier was an exquisite suite of three-strand pearl necklace, bracelet, earrings and diamond blossom ring from the house. The jeweller went on to be the patented supplier of the Principality of Monaco.

The longevity of the maison's support of ballet is also well-known. Today, Van Cleef & Arpels is a major sponsor of The Australian Ballet and facilitates bringing the vision of world-renowned artistic director David Hallberg to the stage. In May, the company presented its production of George Balanchine's *Jewels*, created as an ode to the jewellery house with three acts: Emeralds, Rubies and Diamonds. Ballerina clips remain a mainstay of the house, dating back to the 1940s; and Louis Arpels was a fervent fan of ballet who, before the young man's move to New York to set up a boutique, regularly took his nephew Claude to the Paris Opera.

You will still find the original Van Cleef & Arpels Paris boutique at its 22 Place Vendome address. The brand was founded following the 1895 marriage of Estelle Arpels, the daughter of a gems dealer, to Alfre Van Cleef, whose father was a diamond broker.

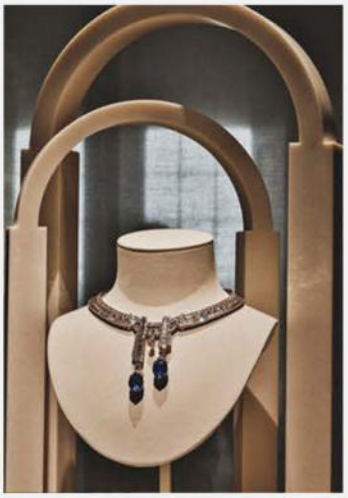
"Everything we do is consistent and true to our philosophy, our core values," says president and CEO Nicolas Bos, who has a background in art history and has consolidated the cultural inspiration of Van Cleef & Arpels and its connection with the arts.

At this pivotal time in the high jewellery industry, of amazing creativity and audacious exhibitions, *Vogue* sat down with Bos the morning after the dinner to discuss Le Grand Tour Collection.

VOGUE AUSTRALIA: **I've just seen the collection up close and it's extraordinary. I love the versatility of the pieces. Is that something that's very important in design?**

NICOLAS BOS: "It's a tradition in jewellery and a very strong tradition at Van Cleef & Arpels from the 1920s. A piece of jewellery, especially in a collection [like this], has to be a work of art. But also has to be a piece that can be worn and enjoyed. In today's world it is important that a piece can be worn in different ways. The idea of this versatility really took hold in the 1920s and 1930s, when very formal pieces were designed to be worn in different ways. I think it is an expression of technique and the level of craftsmanship of the workshop. It requires a lot of specificity and technique in order to develop the mechanisms, to make them almost invisible but quite practical."

VA: **Speaking of extraordinary stones [art historian and journalist] Nicholas Foulkes said that one of the most remarkable things about your work is how you manage to mix incredible** →



Above and below: One of the grand settings for the high jewellery launch event, Palazzo Torlonia. **Right**: VAN CLEEF & ARPELS high jewellery Le Grand Tour Josiah gold necklace with detachable pendants set with sapphires and diamonds, P.O.A.

ÁLVARO GRACIA
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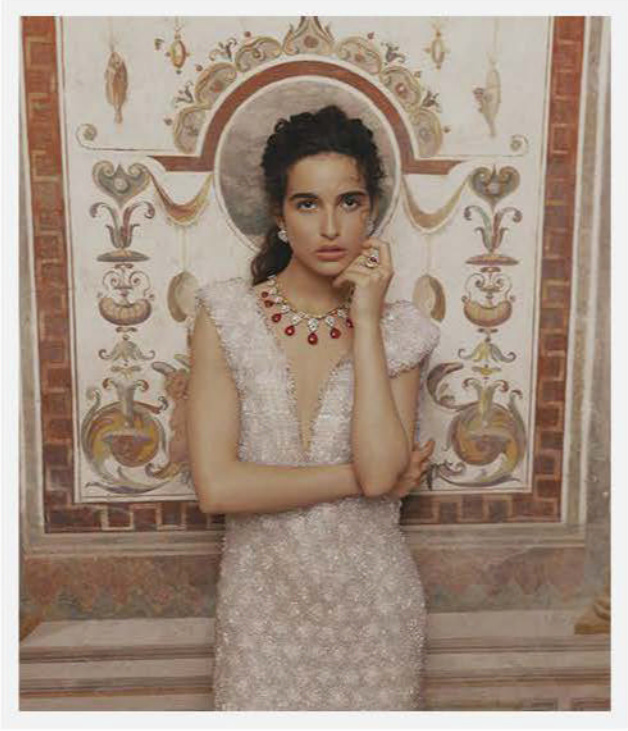

Above left: VAN CLEEF & ARPELS high jewellery Le Grand Tour Éclat Mystérieux gold necklace set with emeralds, sapphires, pearls and diamonds. **Above right**: VAN CLEEF & ARPELS high jewellery Le Grand Tour Villanova gold earrings set with diamonds. Le Grand Tour Villanova gold necklace with detachable pendants set with rubellites and diamonds. Le Grand Tour Teatro gold ring set with ruby and diamonds. All P.O.A.

semiprecious stones with very precious stones to create the unique feeling of Van Cleef. For example, the coral. Do you start with the stones, or gems, or with the design?

NB: "It's pretty much a unique combination in the middle. On one hand you have pieces where you start with the stone … I do not believe in hierarchies of beauty and attractiveness. This is why we look at a lot of different types of stones. What is important is that they are of the highest quality in their category. When you find these exceptional stones, you design around them. And, of course, sometimes the shape of the stone dictates whether it is going to be an element of a brooch or the centre of a ring.

"On the other end of the spectrum you have pieces like the Landscape bracelet we have in the collection, where it is a work of design and drawing and we use smaller-sized stones used as colours for the palette. First, we do the drawing and then we will source the stones according to the drawing. And then we have everything in the middle. I'm thinking of some of the sautoir for instance. There is an idea for a sautoir and the combination of colours that we want to translate, it comes more from the studio. And then the stone experts will say 'I see what you mean. Do you want this type of blue, a bit more cold colours or do you want to lighten it up with shades of pink?' A good combination could be a beryl and a sapphire, so we would see what we have in our little treasure of stones to use, or figure out what we have to find … It is a three-way dialogue between the design, the stones and the workshop and the craftsmen. It is much more of a circle in a way, a collective process where from the beginning of the first idea to when the piece is completely polished and finished, the designers, the stone experts, and the craftsmen work together in different stages along the way in order to bring the best out in the piece."

VA: **There were also some stones in the collection that would be particularly interesting to Australians: opals and pearls, which I assume are South Sea pearls and have quite a pink lustre that comes from red earth. Are there stones and gems you particularly enjoy working with?**

NB: "Always. Pearls are very interesting to me. At the turn of the century, when Van Cleef & Arpels was founded, pearls were much more important than diamonds. I think there were 100 pearl dealers around Place Vendôme and rue La Fayette in Paris. And they were the epitome of rarity and beauty. So, it has been a strong tradition of both natural and cultured pearls, and of course South Sea pearls. We work a lot also with mother-of-pearl in our collections, such as in the Alhambra collection. We have a long-term friendship and partnership with our colleagues at [Australian jeweller] Paspaley. We have been working with them for a very long time; there is a real connection there."

VA: **It is very unusual for people to have both sides of their brain working in this space: the creative side and the business side. Do you find that one part ever overwhelms the other?**

NB: "If you don't have the right balance of creativity, artistic dimension and a sense of business and commercial development, you don't usually last. I think in the world of jewellery and decorative art and fashion, if you don't combine both you're in trouble. If your exercise is purely commercial and marketing and talking to audiences who are more and more attentive to that, and if it's creative at the expense of the commercial aspect, it is quite dangerous as well. It is a necessary combination. And I think historically in our world of jewellery it has been the case."

VA: **Last night, there was a wonderful Lord Byron narrative poem read, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, which is so fitting for the Grand Tour theme. Why did you chose that poem? And tell me a little about the inspiration for the Grand Tour.**

NB: "We discovered that poem of inspiration because it was a poem Byron wrote before he left England and embarked on his own travels. It is a poem very much associated with that period and the romantic dimension of the Grand Tour. Byron is a very important figure of that era and we felt it was a beautiful text, and I loved that the team used it to create the soundtrack for last night's show, because it is a very narrative collection."

VA: **It was very beautiful. An extraordinary few days.**

NB: "*Merci beaucoup*!"

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For life

A crop of established and emerging jewellers are putting their own spin on investment regalia that becomes more special with time. By Jonah Waterhouse.

Clockwise from top left: Jordan Askill; Erede; Presley Oldham; Sarah-Jane Clarke (left and right); Lucy Folk.

The word enduring is often used to describe investment jewellery, but for emerging Australian brand Erede, endurance is just as important. "Jewellery isn't meant to sit idle in a box, but be worn and enjoyed every day," says Talia Shuvalov of the line she and co-founder Jeramie Hotz launched this year. The sturdy geometric designs of Erede's diamond necklaces and earrings are inspired by modernist architecture, with a sophistication owing to the founders' careers in design – Shuvalov at Alexander McQueen and Dion Lee, and Hotz with Australia's renowned Caon Design Office. All of this, Shuvalov says, culminates in their unique pieces made to work in – and weather – every circumstance. "Robustness isn't merely a functional attribute of our jewellery, it's a fundamental element of our aesthetic and design philosophy," she explains.

As the popularity of investment jewellery skyrockets – companies like Bulgari recorded double-digit growth in the past year, while lab-grown diamonds are making the coveted gemstone more accessible – there's an appetite for timeless pieces that are an extension of the wearer and rarely removed. "The idea of something that is heirloom equates to traditional in people's eyes," says designer Lucy Folk, who recently released a range of diamond solitaire rings and is one of many designers updating the idea of investment jewellery. "Anything can be an heirloom if it is made from high-quality materials and loved deeply by its owners."

It's why a new guard of fine jewellers is making distinctive investment regalia intended to be worn day in, day out, as opposed to delicate treasures only used on special occasions. Take Australian Jordan Askill, who just released a capsule of his sturdy bijoux from 13 years ago, even sharing proceeds with animal conservation efforts. Erede shares this conscious outlook; all the brand's diamonds are lab-grown, while its Curated line repurposes vintage jewellery for added originality. "[Erede Curated] allows our clients to connect with bygone eras through jewellery, creating new possibilities and memories," Shuvalov says.

Fine jewellery has long marked milestones, but designers like Presley Oldham prove younger customers are as interested in sentimental gems. Troye Sivan and singer Charli XCX are among those who favour the New York jeweller's bracelets and necklaces, which embrace uncultured, no-two-the-same pearls.

"It comes down to personal preferences – both a 20-year-old and an 80-year-old could love the same classic rice pearl necklace," Oldham shares, adding that some of his most special pieces are commissioned by older customers using family-owned investment pearls, to give to their children or grandchildren. "This speaks to the broad, cross-generational appeal of pearl jewellery, and how we can reinterpret heirlooms as time moves on," he says.

Passing down gemstones through generations is one thing, but passing on customs is another. Australian designer Sarah-Jane Clarke collected charms as a child, wearing them on bracelets, necklaces and anklets as mementos. "The anklet evokes memories of my younger years, being barefoot and free," she recalls.

This led to her new range of diamond and gold charms in shapes like palm trees, crowns and rainbows, made to be keepsakes. Clarke intended for them to be lightweight and compact to add to their ease of wear. "I was interested in exploring on-the-go jewels that could be worn with multiple outfits," she shares.

One might envision Erede's versatile necklaces and earrings, Oldham's eclectic pearl trinkets or Clarke's precious charms eventually being covered in patina, accumulated during a well-lived life. That's the kind of value nobody could put a price on.

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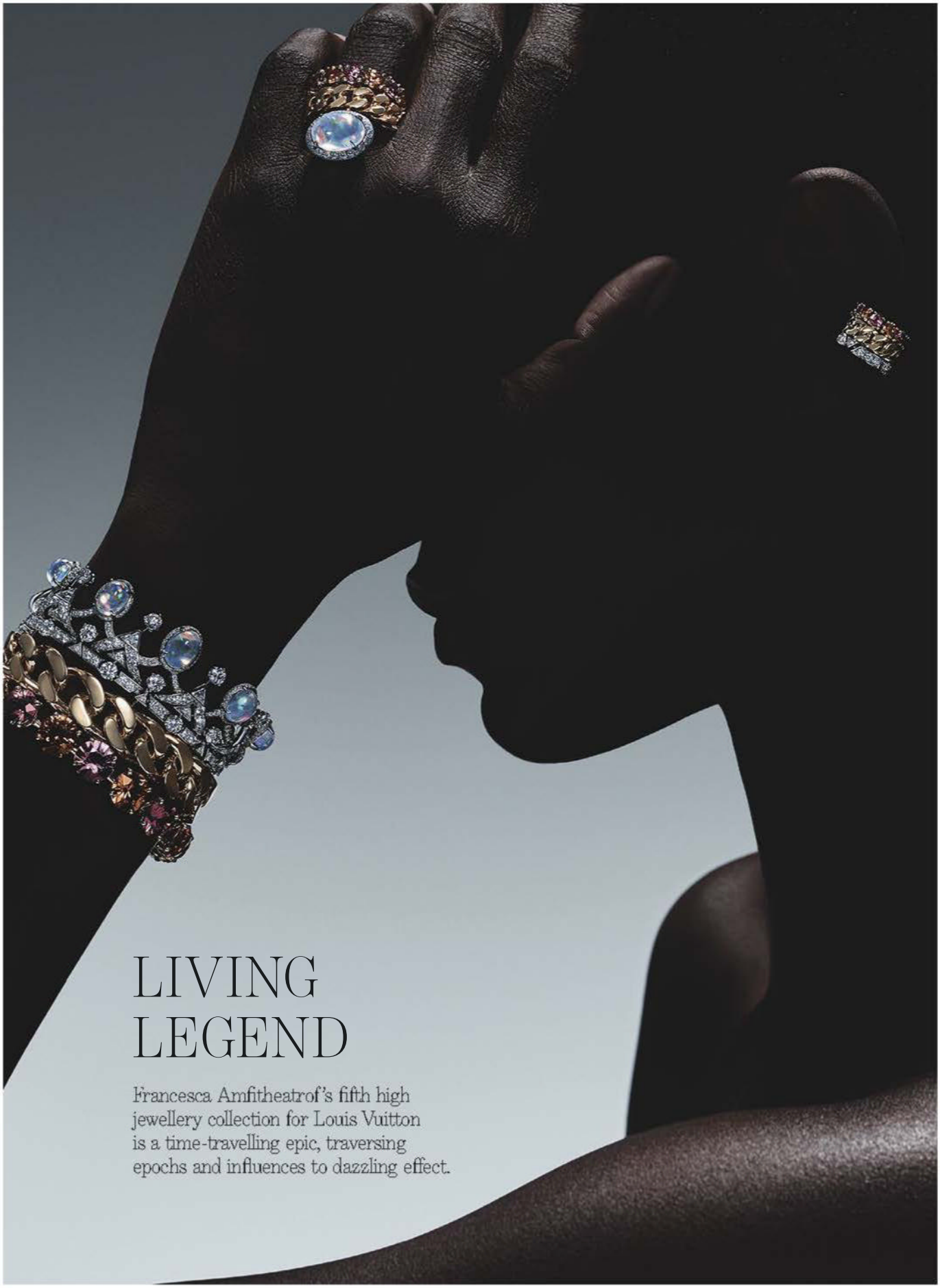

LIVING LEGEND

Francesca Amfitheatrof's fifth high jewellery collection for Louis Vuitton is a time-travelling epic, traversing epochs and influences to dazzling effect.

EXTRAORDINARY MATERIALS
FORM STRIKING COMBINATIONS

Opposite page: Deep Time Rupture ear cuff, ring and bracelet. **This page, clockwise from top:** Deep Time Fossils earrings and necklace; Deep Time Volcano ring; Francesca Amfitheatrof.

Louis Vuitton artistic director Francesca Amfitheatrof draws inspiration from epic scale in the maison's latest offering of precious pieces. Amfitheatrof has been daringly indiscriminate in tapping various touch points to inform 'Deep Time'.

"That daring in that sort of vision and the boldness that Vuitton represents, it's a sense of adventure that fits within my outlook," she says.

A peripatetic creative, Amfitheatrof grew up all over the world and it is this spirit, in step with the French maison's travel-entwined history, that she infuses into the new offering.

The collection comprises over 170 pieces and 16 themes – Louis Vuitton's largest high jewellery offering to date. It is a display of the house's codes, and also, a showcase of innovation and savoir faire.

An elemental spirit underpins it all: unexpected, extraordinary materials form striking combinations, from opal and zircon to rubellite and spessartite garnet. "I love to use quite a lot of stones together, rather than one stone surrounded by diamonds," she says.

While creating it, she also kept in mind a rule-breaking spirit, a boldness that has come to define Louis Vuitton's jewellery. With their own patented diamond cuts, stone selection becomes a way to make a statement, like the jaw-dropping 40-carat blue Sri Lankan sapphire at the centre of a dazzling strand of diamonds. Coupled with graphic geometry – like the concentric circles of the Gondwana necklace and the striking LV Monogram diamonds and chevron, instantly recognisable as the house's own – it is an expression of the maison's creativity and craftsmanship.

It's something that carries through to how the pieces would be worn – layered at will, but always with the thought that they are precious, intended for forever. "The fact that we make only one piece, the fact that we use the most incredible stones so people feel confident that we can buy from Vuitton, because they're getting the investment pieces," she says. "But also, they can have fun."

LOUIS VUITTON

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Ghanaian artist El Anatsui, a visual arts mentor for Rolex, works with wood, clay stone, metals and other found materials in his pieces.

Better together

For 20 years, the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative has paired promising creatives with luminaries in their field, opening up connections across genres, disciplines and borders. As one of the first protégés, Australian writer and director Julia Leigh is in a unique position to comment on its impact, as she tells Edwina McCann.

When Rolex first contacted Julia Leigh about applying for its inaugural Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative, she was cautious. It was the early 2000s and the writer was 32 and living in Paris after having received international acclaim for her sparse and haunting 1999 novel *The Hunter*, about a man alone in the Australian wilderness tracking down the last Tasmanian tiger. "The program at the time simply didn't exist," Leigh reflects. She is in Athens as part of the 20th anniversary celebration for the initiative, for which Rolex has flown in past mentors and protégés, from writer Naomi Alderman to Australian composer Ben Frost, to take part in a grand three-day festival in May featuring art installations, live music, talks and films.

"I got an email in my inbox from the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative, which I'd never heard of, and which was un-googleable," she recalls. But then she scrolled down the message a little further. The chosen protégé would be mentored by Toni Morrison, the novelist, nobel laureate and literary luminary, author of *The Bluest Eye*, *Beloved* and *Song of Solomon*. "My literal thought was, if it's good enough for Toni Morrison, it's good enough for me," she laughs.

Leigh sent in a written application – "now, it's all video" – and was shortlisted to three finalists. (In total, 96 candidates in 39 countries applied across the whole program.) All three finalists

Rolex visual arts protégé Camila Rodríguez Triana uses weaving in her work and was mentored in the program by Carrie Mae Weems.

"Gathering so many mentors and protégés in Athens became what might be one of the most distinguished class reunions you've ever seen"

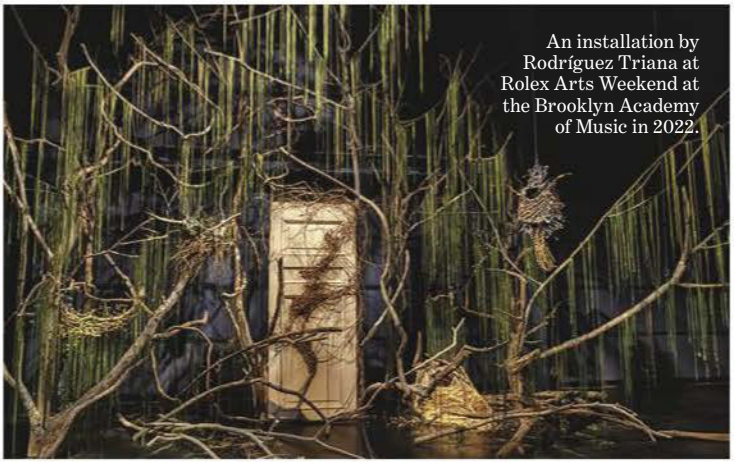
were flown into New York, where they took a train to Princeton, where Morrison was a professor. After both group and individual interviews, Leigh was informed that she had been selected as Morrison's protégé and her mentorship began in 2002. She was part of the first intake of five Rolex protégés; her peers hailed from Hong Kong, Jordan, Argentina and Spain in disciplines including choreography, theatre, architecture and conducting. To date, 63 artists from 41 countries have taken part in the project.

"Rolex inaugurated this initiative in 2002 with the goal of transmitting artistry at the highest level from one generation to the next through the time-honoured tradition of personal encouragement and guidance," said Rebecca Irvin, head of the mentoring program at Rolex, in a statement.

Gathering so many mentors and protégés two decades later in Athens – chosen for its cultural significance as an ancient site of learning and the creative arts – became what might just be one of the most distinguished class reunions you've ever seen. Mentors including the film director Mira Nair, author Bernardine Evaristo and theatre doyenne Julie Taymor reunited with their protégés, and everywhere you turned in the city there was an installation of public art, live performance or outdoor film screening.

Sadly, Morrison died in 2019 at the age of 88 and didn't live to see the program celebrate its 20th anniversary. But Leigh has fond memories of her mentor, whom she describes as a "completely extraordinary woman". In 2003, Leigh relocated from Paris to Princeton to be closer to Morrison during the year of their mentorship as she worked on her second novel *Disquiet*, which was published in 2008. A large part of their working relationship involved Leigh sending passages from the manuscript to Morrison, who devoured them and marked them up by hand.

"Julia has never been line edited before, which shows you how good she is," Morrison said in 2003. "Now, when I get her work, I mark it up. We talk about it. What to delete. What to put back. The first time you work that way with someone else →



An installation by Rodríguez Triana at Rolex Arts Weekend at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 2022.

Rolex visual arts mentor William Kentridge with protégé Mateo López in Kentridge's Johannesburg studio.

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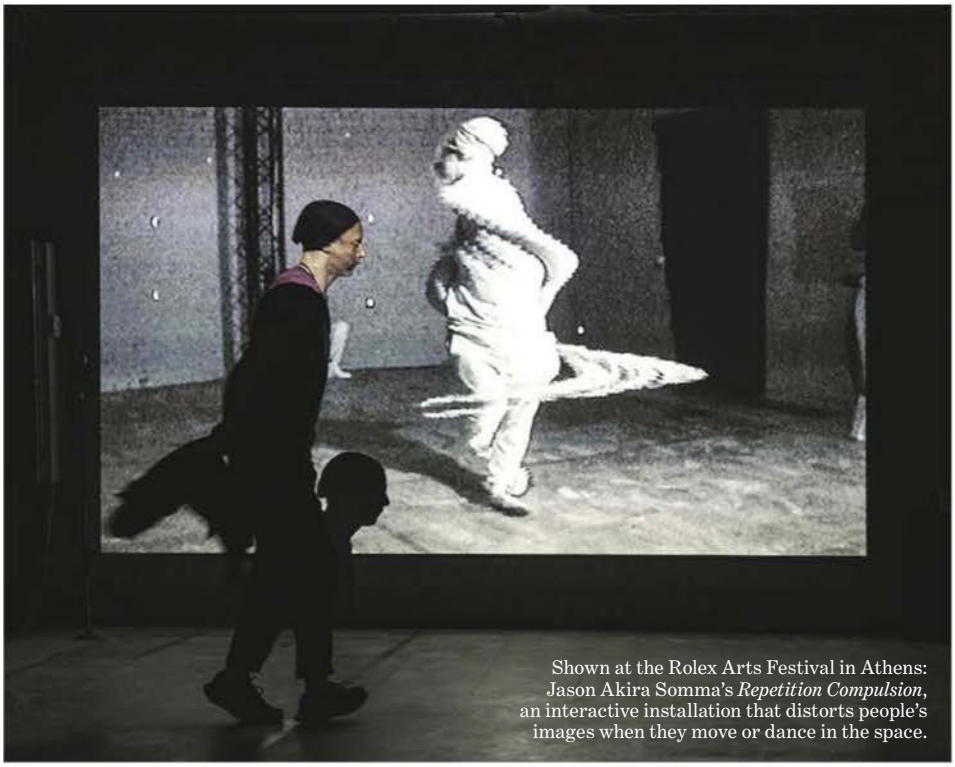
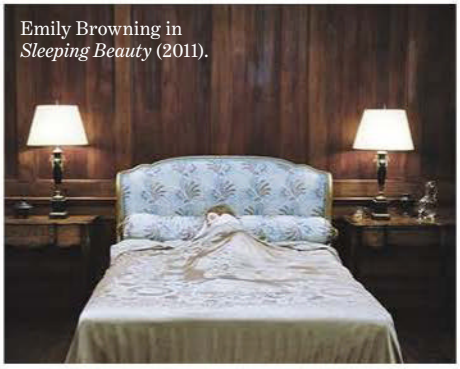
"The great, unexpected lasting pleasure has been forming friendships with fellow artists from around the world"



Shown at the Rolex Arts Festival in Athens: Jason Akira Somma's *Repetition Compulsion*, an interactive installation that distorts people's images when they move or dance in the space.



Emily Browning in *Sleeping Beauty* (2011).

Julia Leigh.

is critical. What happens? Are you going to get upset because somebody wrote on your manuscript?" The process was rigorous and detail focused. "We go over every comma, from A to Z," Morrison said.

"There's a prep-school notion that you get things right the first time," the author added. "But [the] more you write, the more you realise that you can rewrite. The point, in the end, is to make way for the inevitable." Morrison likened her role as a mentor to a midwife, helping to bring a baby into the world. "Then there comes a moment when the thing happens, and it's there and then I let go," she explained. "At that point, the job is all hers. No one can write your book for you. As midwives, we can't own things."

Leigh, reflecting now, says she was privileged enough to see "the two sides" of Morrison. "I saw the side of her in her apartment having a cup of tea, and she was a smoker, having a cigarette, just chatting. I saw, also, how she conducted herself in her rather grand public life as a writer," says Leigh. She recalls being at a dinner with Morrison when a woman came up to her and expressed her enthusiasm for her works. "And then asked what novel should her brilliant 10-year-old daughter read first. And I think Toni Morrison said: 'I don't think she probably should read them at that time." Leigh laughs. "She conducted herself so impeccably, but then she was also just quite a good-humoured person."

Aside from the relationships between mentors and protégés, the program is also famous for fostering closeness between artists across all disciplines and fields. Before the festival in Athens, Rolex staged reunions in cities including New York, London, Venice, Mexico City and Cape Town, many of which Leigh attended. "The great, unexpected lasting pleasure has been forming friendships with fellow artists from around the world," she says. That includes Ben Frost, the Iceland-based, Melbourne-raised composer, musician and performer, whose sound installation *The Predatory Chord* was staged during the Rolex Arts Festival. Created specifically for Megaron's Alexandra Trianti Hall in Athens, the atmospheric work was played on more than 30 speakers suspended above the audience.

Leigh and Frost met as part of the "community of protégés", as she puts it. In 2011, when Leigh was working on her directorial debut *Sleeping Beauty*, which would go on to be selected for the Cannes Film Festival, she read an email from Rolex about that year's list of protégés, which included Frost. Leigh approached him to compose the score for the film, for which he crafted an expansive electronic soundscape, and Rolex even ended up supporting the movie's Cannes premiere. "It was through the program that I met one of my great friends and collaborators," Leigh reflects, something that makes the network so special. She recalls roundtable discussions and "fabulous meals" and "things that happen in the mini-vans" that bond the protégés together over the years of the initiative. "We've all been trying to make our lives as working artists," muses Leigh. "There's ups and downs and roundabouts. It's just a beautiful thing to have true, true friendships that have come out of this program." ■

ALAMY, ©ROLEX: RETO ALBERTALLI.

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60 THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET

Through the looking glass

Lady Amelia and Lady Eliza Spencer, the twin nieces of Diana, Princess of Wales, welcome *Vogue* into their London lives before making a debut visit to Australia, as ambassadors for the Victoria Racing Club's Melbourne Cup Carnival. By Divya Venkataraman.

STYLING HARRIET CRAWFORD **PHOTOGRAPHS** ROB TENNENT

The surface-level likeness of Lady Amelia and Lady Eliza Spencer is enough to make you take a beat: long, expensively honeyed hair swishes like a single set of curtains; sharp cheekbones catch the light at precisely the same angle. Sitting across from each other in an East London studio following their shoot for *Vogue* Australia, they are even accidentally dressed the same: both in a black-and-white Michael Kors lounge set that each chose individually.

"I know it's ridiculous," Lady Amelia laughs, glancing over at the mirror image that is her sister. "We really didn't plan this."

The Spencer twins, along with their sister Lady Kitty and younger brother, Louis, Viscount Althorp, are the children of Charles Spencer and his former wife, model Victoria Lockwood. The children all grew up in Constantia, an affluent valley suburb of Cape Town, South Africa, where the family moved in 1995 to avoid the scrutiny that came with the Spencer name. Earl Spencer, Princess Diana's younger brother, moved back to England after his divorce from Lockwood in 1997, but the rest of the family remained.

The Spencer children share a half-brother, Samuel Aitken, from their mother's second marriage and three half-siblings – brother The Honourable Edmund Spencer and sisters Lady Lara Spencer and Lady Charlotte Spencer – from their father's subsequent marriages to Caroline Freud and Karen Gordon. →

HAIR: HEITAI CHEUNG MAKE-UP: MARIA COMPARETTO
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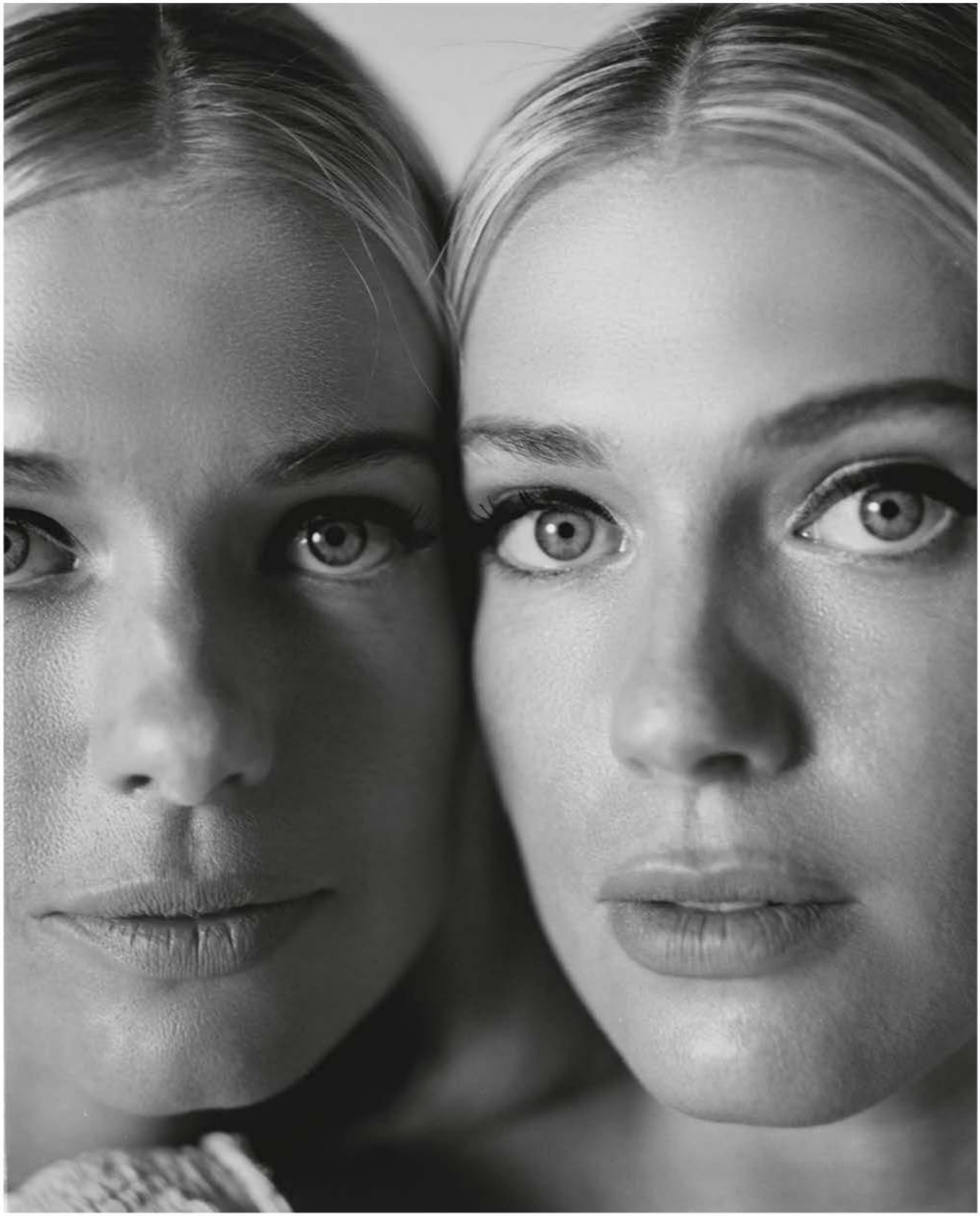

Opposite page: Lady Eliza (left) wears a BEVZA jacket, $2,050, and skirt, $1,470. STEPHEN JONES MILLINERY hat, $1,100. BOODLES necklace, P.O.A. Lady Amelia wears a SHUSHU/TONG jacket, $1,260, and skirt, $660. EMILY-LONDON headpiece, $1,385. BOODLES earrings, P.O.A.
This page: Lady Amelia (left) wears a Nicol & Ford bodysuit, $2,200.

"As children we were exposed to a very laid-back lifestyle at home and a very traditional time in England. It really was the best of both worlds"

In 2021, following in the footsteps of their model sister Lady Kitty, the twins, now 31, also decided to move to London.

So how has it been settling into the city, after formative years spent so far away from not only the media's glare but the rigidity of the English aristocrat scene? South Africa must have been a world mostly removed from the grand family estate of Althorp.

"We would come back to England a couple of times a year to see family," says Lady Amelia. "So as children, we were exposed to both a very laid-back lifestyle at home and a very traditional time in England." Lady Eliza concurs: "It really was the best of both worlds."

While the twins stayed mostly out of the public eye during their adolescence and much of their 20s – Lady Amelia pursued a career in events, while Lady Eliza studied criminology and psychology – they are now embracing the worlds of society and fashion. "It's been an adjustment, but we've had the most incredible journey here," says Lady Eliza. "We've gotten to travel together and really experience life together."

"It's been busy!" agrees Lady Amelia.

The sisters both signed with modelling agency Storm on arrival in London, and have been regulars on the guest lists for fashion weeks in Milan, Paris and London, as well as society events. Most recently, they were announced as the faces of Boodles, the luxury British jewellery house.

Neither is fazed by the fact they are essentially a package deal. "It's actually been great, because we're so similar and we just get on so well," they say, one sister starting the sentence and the other sweeping in to pick up her thread. "We're in the same friendship group, we did the same sports at school … We've got the same taste in everything," says Lady Amelia.

"When we go to restaurants, we order the same thing," confirms Lady Eliza. "We're not identical … but our personalities are pretty identical." (Case in point: when asked to highlight something, anything, different between them, they pause. "I'm left-handed," offers Lady Amelia, triumphantly.)

The twins first caught public attention in 2011 at the wedding of their first cousin Prince William to Kate Middleton. Lady Amelia later attended Prince Harry's 2018 wedding to Meghan Markle, with her mother Victoria, sister Lady Kitty and brother Louis, Viscount Althorp. Kitty Spencer has become a stalwart of the international social scene in her own right: she is an ambassador for Dolce & Gabbana, which made her five dresses for her wedding to businessman Michael Lewis in 2021, and has appeared in multiple campaigns for jewellery house Bulgari.

Lady Amelia now lives in upmarket Fulham with her husband of six months, Greg Mallett. Lady Eliza, who has been dating her partner Channing Millerd for seven years, moved from the nearby suburb of Battersea to Fulham just two days before our shoot. "Twenty minutes between us was too far," she laughs.

Spencer and Mallett wed at the start of 2023 in South Africa, at a glamorous ceremony, with the bride wearing a custom corseted Versace gown. "It was what I had dreamed of. But also so much more beautiful and special than I could have imagined."

Both share a strong affinity with their home country. "South Africa is where we basically grew up together, my partner and I," says Lady Amelia. "It's where we got engaged and it holds all of our most special memories. I just don't think anything could have compared to the beauty of Cape Town."

This month the twins are visiting Australia for the first time, as official ambassadors for the Victoria Racing Club. "It's somewhere we've always wanted to go. We've never been before," Lady Amelia says. Lady Kitty has attended the Melbourne Cup Carnival before, and has only passed on good things. "Kitty said

Above: Lady Eliza and Lady Amelia, at age one, with their parents Victoria Lockwood and Earl Spencer and sister Lady Kitty at the family's Althorp estate in 1993. **Below**: The twins attend Royal Ascot in 2022 (left), and Cartier Queen's Cup Polo in June this year (right).

that everyone in Australia is just so warm and happy and welcoming and social, you know, and fun to be around."

"She's always said, 'I know that if you guys go to Australia, you will probably never come back.' Because it's so similar to the way we grew up. Always in the outdoors and beautiful nature; South Africa is apparently very similar to Australia. In terms of lifestyle, completely," says Lady Amelia.

A guilty pleasure adds to the appeal. "We're big *MasterChef Australia* fans," admits Lady Eliza. "So we already feel like we know [the country] a bit."

The sisters will spend most of their time in Melbourne: Flemington for Lexus Melbourne Cup Day on Tuesday, November 7 and Kennedy Oaks Day two days later. "It's going to be so incredible to see the fashion and the social scene," says Lady Eliza. "It's such an iconic event. It's such an honour to be invited and to be able to experience it."

They're trying to fit in as much adventure as possible, too. "We'd love to explore the country, go on some beautiful walks and hikes," says Lady Amelia. "And see what Melbourne's food scene is like," adds Lady Eliza. "Apparently it's the best in the country."

They've also got their eyes on Australian designers. The twins love the work of Rebecca Vallance, as well as the femininity of

Lady Eliza (left) wears a BORA AKSU dress, $4,015. STEPHEN JONES MILLINERY headpiece, $920. BOODLES ring, P.O.A. NODALETO shoes, $1,060. Lady Amelia wears a NICOL & FORD bodysuit, $2,200. KITTY HEMMINGS skirt, $1,820. EMILY-LONDON headpiece, $1,615. BOODLES earrings, P.O.A. CASADEI shoes, $610.

"Kitty always said, 'I know that if you guys to go Australia, you will probably never come back.' Because it's so similar to the way we grew up"

Zimmermann. The third, they're not sure how to pronounce. "Ah-j?" ventures Lady Eliza. Aje, as it happens, is a natural fit in their wardrobe, with its sophisticated cuts and silhouettes. "We love Australian fashion," says Lady Amelia. "There are a lot of relaxed, natural, laid-back designs, very similar to our style. It's like South African style, too. Beachy, relaxed, feminine."

While a complementary pair of silk Carolina Herrera dresses hang behind them, ready to wear to a restaurant launch following *Vogue*'s shoot, Lady Amelia and Lady Eliza prefer a more low-key look off duty. "It's fun to dress up, but our natural, everyday style is very relaxed and casual. We've really stuck to how we grew up, with jeans and T-shirts," says Lady Amelia. It comes from their mother, who both look up to. "She's a very stylish woman," says Lady Eliza. "But effortlessly, I think," adds Lady Amelia. "She doesn't like to stand out from the crowd. It's more of a 70s style that she goes for. Very relaxed, but always classy."

It's the same aesthetic they're planning to channel for the racing season. "I know the Australian style is quite natural," says Lady Eliza. "And for me, if it's a long day, less is more." "Less is definitely more," agrees her sister. "I love to keep my hair away from my face for events. It's what I did for my wedding day."

So, headpieces or fascinators? Or simple headbands? "Headbands, for sure," the twins confirm. "We're not often around fascinators and headpieces. It's not traditional in South Africa to wear those to weddings." For their millinery, they particularly love the work of Irish haute couture milliner Philip Treacy and Stephen Jones, who has also attended the Melbourne Cup Carnival in the past, most recently as a judge for the 2022 Myer Fashions on the Field National Final.

One day the twins hope to move from working with fashion brands they love to creating their own. "Eliza and I have spoken about having our own label," says Lady Amelia. "We have such a certain look we love." A new venture launched by two exceptionally like-minded people sounds like the making of an ideal collaboration. They nod in unison. "Yes! Two brains, but very similar brains." ■

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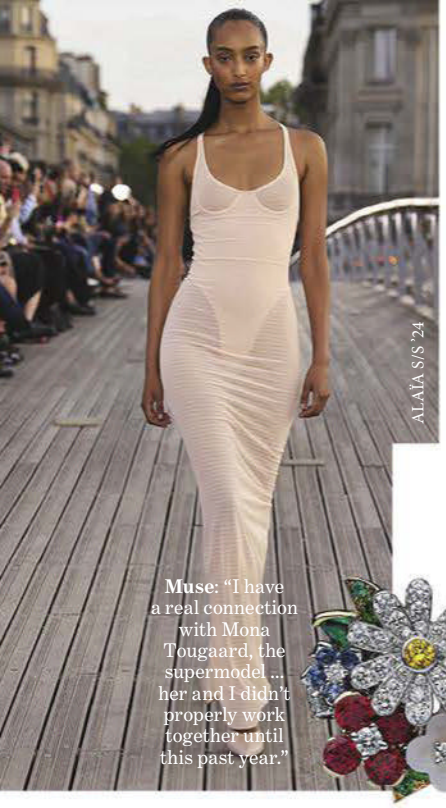
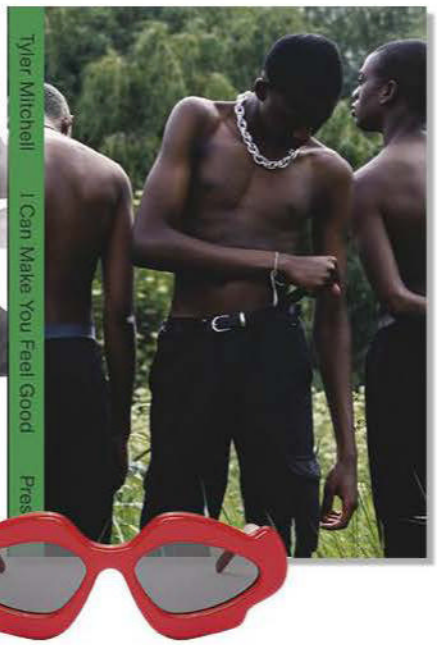


Muse: "I have a real connection with Mona Tougaard, the supermodel ... her and I didn't properly work together until this past year."

Creative inspiration: "Directors Ingmar Bergman (pictured right at the camera in 1983), Robert Altman, Yasujiro Ozu ... their humanistic, grounded, powerful, unpretentious storytelling allowed me to think about my work in [different ways]."



LOEWE sunglasses, $500.

Sentimental shoot: "The cover of my book (above) *I Can Make You Feel Good* (Prestel) was five young men all lined up in England. Twelve hours before the shoot I decided to try and make some work that was really for me, it was something I needed to make that felt so immediate." **Must-have item**: "Anything Loewe. I love what Jonathan Anderson is doing for the brand."

Jewellery: "Victoire de Castellane, creative director of Dior jewellery. I love it because it's so full-on." **Above right**: Dior Fine Jewellery ring, P.O.A.

Tyler Mitchell

At just 28, Mitchell is one of the most influential fashion photographers today. With his work part of the National Gallery of Victoria's epic *Triennial* next month, he shares his own creative stimuli.

Not many photographers can say their first major assignment was shooting Beyoncé for *Vogue*, but Tyler Mitchell's life is far from normal. In 2018, the singer chose the 23-year-old lensman to capture her September issue appearance, making Mitchell the first Black photographer to shoot the cover of US *Vogue*.

Campaigns for Loewe, Ferragamo and Wales Bonner followed, as well as a tome of his work in 2020. Over time, Mitchell has become known for democratically capturing his subjects, whether a passer-by or a supermodel, in the same intimate, emotive light, which makes the Australian debut of his work at NGV's *Triennial* – a documentation of the world through the work of 100 leading artists – even more compelling. "I'm very honoured to be included," he says. "It's a really big moment." *The NGV* Triennial *in Melbourne runs from December 3 to April 7.*

Beyoncé for US *Vogue*'s September 2018 issue, photographed by Mitchell.

Signature scent: "All of the Comme des Garçons fragrances."

Photographers: "Gordon Parks (above) and [Roy] DeCarava remain foundational in terms of how I understand my own work."

Joaquin Phoenix in *The Master* (2012).

Film: "*The Master*. Every still could've been a photograph, but it's also a movie that was deeply imperfect ... I thought, 'This is amazing that movies can operate this way, and that they don't have to be structured or perfect ... they can be loose and free and clean.'"

Picnic (2021) by Tyler Mitchell, which will appear at NGV *Triennial*.

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Great minds

Opinions? Fran Lebowitz has a few. In advance of her next tour to Australia, Annie Brown settles in for an exclusive audience with the writer, critic and cultural figure.

PHOTOGRAPHS CYBELE MALINOWSKI

Fran Lebowitz screens her calls. I know this because I called her landline in New York armed with the following instructions: start recording a message and wait for Lebowitz – who famously doesn't have a mobile phone, computer or wi-fi – to pick up. Also, do not ask her about her smoking. When Lebowitz does pick up I say again that it's Annie Brown calling from *Vogue* Australia. "I know," she replies in her signature staccato clip. "That's why I answered."

The first thing Lebowitz tells me is that all she could think of when she first came to Australia, in 2017, was how she would go without smoking on the interminably long flight to get here. "I was so concerned about this. I talked about it so much that I was at a party and I was talking to this guy and he said, 'You didn't go yet?' I said, 'No.'" He said, 'I saw you two months ago and you were worried about it then.' And I said, 'I know, I'm worried about it still,'" she says.

These were her strategies for the flight: avoid checking a watch. ("Don't look at your watch. Don't think about it. Just read your book.") Read a book that could theoretically last 19 hours. (Robert Caro's monumental tome *The Power Broker* was "the perfect choice".) Find someone who will race you outside at LAX on the stopover from New York so you can "nic up for the flight".

In any case, she made it then – "I still say my biggest accomplishment was not killing anyone on that flight" – and will make the same trip Down Under again in February for a series of speaking engagements. Because having published two bestselling books, *Metropolitan Life* (1978) and *Social Studies* (1981), Lebowitz came down with a decades-long case of writer's block, or "writer's blockade" as she's called it, and turned to public speaking.

The 73-year-old raconteur's opinions, famously acerbic, extremely specific and of which she has many, are things people will pay to hear. (Travel, as it happens, is something she has strong opinions on. "What I hate about travelling is travelling. I like being in different places. But I don't like to get there.")

Lebowitz moved to New York from Morristown, New Jersey, when she was 18. On her way to writing "funny reviews of bad movies" for *Interview* magazine and penning her two bestselling books, she worked a series of jobs including taxi driver and cleaner (with a stated specialty in Venetian blinds). All of this, of course, has made for great material. A cultural figure since the 1970s, Lebowitz is now a bonafide celebrity. In recent years this has partly been due to the success of the Netflix series *Pretend it's a City*, in which Lebowitz holds forth with her great friend, the director Martin Scorsese. The filmmaker's delight in her opinions, on subjects ranging from tourists to wellness, is one of the pleasures of the series.

"Marty thinks I'm funnier than anyone else does and he has just always thought this. You know, truthfully, I could say to Marty, 'Will you please pass the salt,' and he laughs," says Lebowitz.

People stop Lebowitz in the streets more than they ever have. Always, they ask for a selfie. Often young people will tell her that they wish they'd lived in Lebowitz's New York of the 1970s where she worked for Andy Warhol at *Interview* magazine and preferred jazz clubs to nightclubs and her social

Fran Lebowitz.

set included Lou Reed and Robert Mapplethorpe. One of her closest friends was the late Toni Morrison.

But nostalgia for a time not experienced, and with all its edges sanded off, is something she finds peculiar.

"When I was in my twenties, I didn't stop old people on the street and say, 'I wish I lived in New York in the 30s. I really thought about this: was New York more fun in the 70s? I finally decided, well, here's what it is for me. I was in New York in my twenties and my seventies. It's definitely more fun to be in your twenties in the 70s than to be in your seventies in the 20s, which I'm in now. So I'll tell kids, look if you're in your twenties, you should have fun. Because life does not get more and more fun. And I don't care where you live or who you are. If you don't have fun in your twenties you're never going to have fun," she says.

For all of her reputation for being a curmudgeon – she once said she was expelled from her high school for "unspecified surliness" – Lebowitz likes making people laugh and enjoys answering questions at her speaking engagements. "I think what I like about it is, you know, I'm old, but even if you're not this old, people very often love the thing they weren't allowed to do as children. I was a child in the 1950s. No one ever asked a child a question. Ever. We were constantly told, 'You're just a child, how could you have any answer to anything.'" So I love the fact that people ask me questions."

She doesn't mind the selfies, either. "People always say, 'I know you hate this, but I love your series, or I love your books.' And I think, 'No, why would I hate that?' You know, people say a lot worse things than that to me. I'm not America's sweetheart. If you like something I do, I'm happy to talk to you. Selfies, I just do them, but I just don't understand the point of them."

Lebowitz, who says she enjoys her own company most, loves reading above all things. She has about 12,000 books in her New York apartment and has hired a private librarian to help organise them. What she'd really like to do is lie about reading books all day. "I want to say if this was a job, A, I would be the happiest person in the world also B, I'd be a billionaire." →

Martin Scorsese with Lebowitz in his 2021 series *Pretend it's a City*. **Below**: Lebowitz on a model of New York.

It would also not be her "guilty pleasure" to do this, because this is something she doesn't believe in. "I personally never feel guilty for pleasure. I live in a world where people don't feel guilty for killing people. It's a bizarre combination of words. Unless your pleasure is killing people," she says. "I think the idea of guilt is bizarre in the sense that you should inflict it upon yourself for something that you just enjoy."

Other things she thinks are overrated? Most things. "Almost everything is overrated," she says, but her answer, like many of them, is shot through with mirth.

"I learned this, especially with books. You know every book publishing season there are 10 new geniuses. And I always say, genius is so rare that the chances that there's going to be a new genius every three months is zero," she says. "Genius is so rare that Albert Einstein is still the worldwide symbol of genius even though he's been dead forever."

Of pure pleasures, Lebowitz has several. Most of them, vexingly for her, are expensive. "I'm a very materialistic person. I love furniture. I love clothes. I love cars. I know you're supposed to hate cars now, but I don't. I'm really interested in these things. The problem is I hate money. So it's a terrible combination."

However, and crucially, Lebowitz also takes good care of her good things. Something she says you'd understand if you knew her father, who was a furniture upholsterer. "My father was a maniac of meticulousness," she begins. "So when he died and I went through his things, my father had clothes that I remember from what I saw in the 50s, and they were in pretty good shape. My father's bedroom slippers had wooden shoe trees in them."

Recently she amazed a drycleaner when she took in some clothes given to her by the late New York fashion designer Geoffrey Beene. "He called me up once and said, 'I made myself a bunch of jackets in the 60s, but they don't fit me anymore and I thought maybe you would like them.' If you ever saw him, he looked like a hardboiled egg, he was a very short, very round guy. So I went over to a studio and he gave me a bunch of jackets and they didn't really fit me, but they're so great," she says.

One of the jackets was made from woven angora and Lebowitz says the drycleaner couldn't believe it. It's the kind of detail that gives her a real kick, because while Lebowitz says she doesn't really follow fashion, she really, *really* loves clothes.

Her own style, dandy-ish and consistent – the cowboy boots, the oversized blazers from Savile Row tailors Anderson & Sheppard, the crisp white shirt and the Levi's 501s, always worn cuffed – has become the subject of much slavish commentary online.

For Lebowitz, her clothes are more to do with her particular-ness rather than anything to do with creating a personal "uniform".

"People show me pictures of myself [and say], 'Look at this picture from 1977, you are dressed exactly the same.' So first of all, no. To you it looks the same because you know nothing about clothes. I mean, it's the same kind of idea. But the clothes I have now … they're not the same jackets, they're not the same shirts. They are the same jeans however, yes, that is true. But other than that, they're really not the same. People also say, 'You wear a uniform,' – it's not a uniform. 'You always wear a black jacket.' I don't even own a black jacket except for my dinner jacket," she says.

"I love clothes. I'm really interested in them. But most people who think that they're interested in clothes are not really interested in clothes. They're interested in conveying some sort of notion of themselves."

In *Metropolitan Life*, Lebowitz wrote: "There is no such thing as inner peace. There is only nervousness or death." On happiness too, she has her opinions. "My idea is that happiness is not a condition, it's a sensation," she says. "I mean, I'm not distraught at the moment, but happiness is a fleeting sensation. It's a moment of happiness. And I'm happy to have those moments. But I would not spend my life looking for a way to have that be permanent. Because it's not possible."

Despite being a person who has stayed remarkably consistent, one thing she knows for sure is that nothing stays the same. Still, is there anything she'd like to be permanent? "I'll tell you something. Nothing. Which is a lucky thing. Because nothing is."

Except perhaps that people are always going to listen to what Fran Lebowitz has to say.

An Evening With Fran Lebowitz is on at the Sydney Opera House February 13 and 14, 2024. Tickets are available now.

MONTE & LOU
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Wise words

As we gear up for the third year of *Vogue* Australia's Future Innovators program, celebrating the brightest young minds in tech, we check in with three alumnae on their most important pieces of career wisdom.

The tech-preneur

Camille Goldstone-Henry
Future Innovators 2022 finalist and founder of Xylo Systems

Being a female founder is a journey, not a destination, stresses Xylo Systems co-founder Camille Goldstone-Henry. And one in which you have to accept the "nos" along with the "yeses", whether it's from investors, customers, or even simply because of being a woman. "We are inherently told 'no' and we don't belong because of the terrible gender diversity in the industry. So knowing that dealing with rejection is all a part of the journey is what I wish someone had told me at the start … it would have saved me a lot of tears!" she says.

Goldstone-Henry has big plans for her company, which hopes to help change the way major organisations manage their biodiversity footprint. Something she draws inspiration from is her friendship with 2022 Future Innovators winner Urwah Nawaz. "Having founder friends to lean on and ride the wave of building a tech startup together is so important," she says.

The winner and finalists of this year's *Vogue* Codes Future Innovators, proudly presented by Optus, will be in next month's issue.

The health innovator

Hanna Nowicka
Future Innovators 2021 finalist
and biomedical engineer at Seer Medical

Biomedical engineer Hanna Nowicka, currently working in machine learning at Seer Medical, Australia's largest provider of epilepsy diagnostic monitoring, hopes that being selected as a Future Innovators finalist in 2021 inspires "future generations of women with a technical background". "We should be celebrating all women doing amazing things – not only in the celebrity or entertainment worlds but also in science and technology," she adds.

When she entered Future Innovators, Nowicka was nurturing a startup idea that she hopes to one day revisit. For now, her work in machine learning for a big business is giving her perspective, experience and inspiration. Of career advice, she shares: "Having a bigger-picture perspective and not being scared of thinking outside the box unlocks a whole other dimension of opportunities. I've learnt that often it is possible to approach a technical problem with a non-technical solution." Another piece of wisdom? Build a community. Nowicka began her own Melbourne-based running group for those working in startups that has brought so many new friends with shared experiences into her life. "It's not strictly a career achievement," she says, "but it is an example of an authentic life experience that enhances my career in ways I didn't imagine."

The climate champion

Lily Dempster
Future Innovators 2021 finalist and
founder of One Small Step

In the two years since Lily Dempster entered the Future Innovators program, the founder of One Small Step – a free app that measures users' environmental impact, for which she was recently named a Cartier Women's Initiative fellow – has not only given birth to her first child, but has seen the business grow and grow. Becoming a parent has transformed how Dempster works. "Unexpectedly, I'm more productive after becoming a parent," she says, noting that needing to focus during "narrow pockets of time" encourages her to "work a lot faster and more effectively".

One of her biggest goals is to be a present parent while also building a tool – currently used by more than 70,000 Australians – that can help improve the world for future generations. Her best piece of career wisdom is actually about understanding when *not* to listen to advice. "To trust my own judgement, and figure out what I think first, rather than over-relying on other people for advice or opinions," she explains.

WORDS: HANNAH-ROSE YEE PHOTOGRAPH: ERIC BOMAN

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Audrey 2.5-Seater Lounge, from $2,399, and Audrey 1.5-Seater, from $2,199, both upholstered in Zepel Akoya fabric in Moss; Sweden Coffee Table Set (not Australian made), $1,099; Flux Beige Rug, 160x230cm, $1,399; Warwick Glass Bubble Vase in Coffee, Large, $119; Rye Moss Cushion, $69; all other items stylist's own.

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DINING
customisation

Choose your table

SIZE & STAIN

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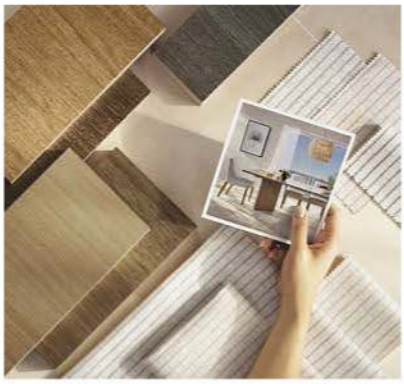


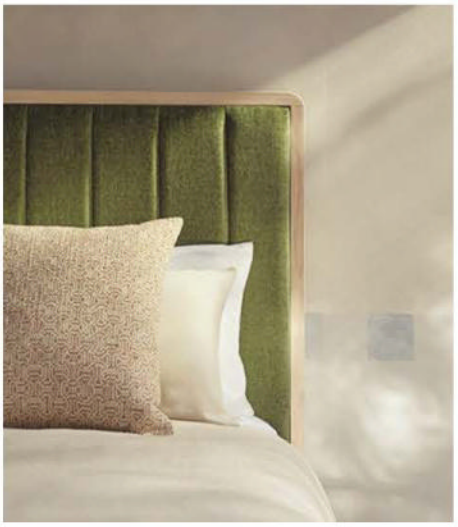
Choose your chair

FABRIC & STAIN

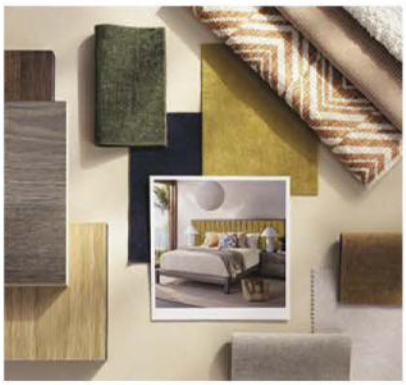
Stain Luca chairs to match your Orana table and upholster in your choice of fabrics.

Orana Dining Table in French Grey, from $3,999; Luca Dining Chairs upholstered in Warwick Fabrics Wells fabric in Amalfi, from $699 each; Orson Sheer White Curtains, 180x250cm, $69 each; Filigree White Extendable Curtain Rod Set, 230-380cm, $69; Sabal The Palm Wall Art, $179; Bohemia Natural Pendant, $329; Baxter Large Planter, $439; Ecology Classic Tumbler Glasses, Set of 4, $39; Zulu Stripe Bowl, $89; Robert Gordon Origin Solitude Bowl, $109; Robert Gordon Speckle Table of Plenty Round Platter, $49; Salt & Pepper Salut Champagne Flutes, Set of 6, $59; all other items stylist's own.

BEDROOM
customisation



Choose your
BEDHEAD WIDTH
End your bedhead at the bed frame for a neat look (above) or go for drama with the winged option (right).



Choose your
FABRIC & STAIN
Pick from eight stains for the frame and finish the bedhead in a complementary Warwick fabric.

Queens Bed, Queen, with Silverlynx timber stain and upholstery in Warwick Fabrics Magma fabric in Dijon, $3,699; Queens 2-Drawer Bedside Tables, Standard, $1,359 each; Bondi 60cm Round Ottoman, $599; Orson Sheer White Curtain, 180x250cm, $69; Rio Rattan White Pendant, Large, $349; Roderick Taupe Rug, Large, 200x290cm, $1,099; Otto Table Lamps, $269 each; Harris Green Bottle, $76; Bambi Touch Tencel White Sheet Set, Queen with 50cm Wall, $439; Ecology Dream Stone Quilt Cover, King, $229; Stetson Dust Throw, $229; Oxford Terracotta Cushion, $69; Bradley Terracotta Cushion, $69; Layla Reversible Blue Cushion, $59; all other items stylist's own.

SWEET DREAMS Drift off in a bedroom designed just for you, with elegant timber pieces complemented by soft furnishings featuring fabrics in your favourite colours and patterns.

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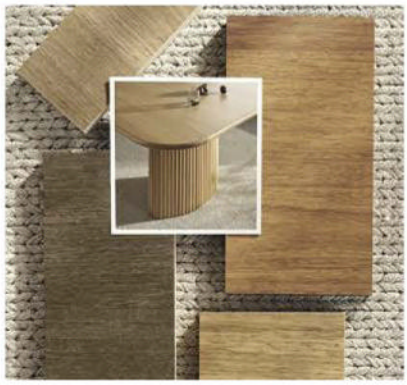
DINING
customisation

Choose your
SHAPE
Make the most of the space you have with a Saxon dining table in your pick of a round or rectangular shape.



Choose your
STAIN
Complement the Saxon's elegant silhouette with a modern stain in Ash, Mimosa, Natural or Smoke.

Saxon Round 160cm Dining Table in Natural, $4,499; Arc Dining Chair* in Natural, $299; Carly Dining Chair* in Walnut with Beige upholstery, $599; Megan Dining Chairs* in Walnut with White PU upholstery, $599 each; Hamptons Silver Indoor/Outdoor Rug, 200cm, $1,399; Robert Gordon Origin Platform, $74; Salt & Pepper Hazel Narrow Vase, $89; Robert Gordon Slate Table of Plenty Oval Platter, $59; Ecology Classic Tumbler Glasses, Set of 4, $39; Eden Large Tabletop Sculpture, $119; Wave Low Khaki Vase, $79; Willow Vessel, $39; Sloane Sand Vase, $64; Weston Mustard Vase, $79; Anderson Terracotta Vase, $35; all other items stylist's own.

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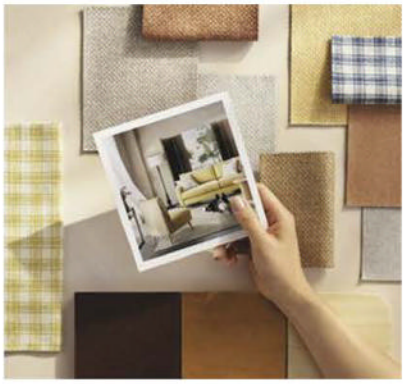
LOUNGE
customisation

Choose your
SIZE & LEGS
Alter the Fitz leg style to suit your taste and choose from a great range of sizes to fit your space.



Choose your
FABRIC & STAIN
Match your pick of three timber stains for the legs with luxe Warwick Fabrics upholstery.

SITTING PRETTY
Start with a lounge in a classic silhouette and play with the colours and finishes to create the ultimate centrepiece.

Fitz 3.5-Seater Lounge upholstered in Warwick Fabrics Burwood fabric in Honey, made to order from $2,199; Cassie Accent Chair upholstered in Warwick Fabrics Burwood fabric in Honey and Warwick Fabrics Salford fabric in Lemon, made to order from $1,599; Saxon Lamp Table, $1,199; Davenport Console Table*, $1,899; Orson Sheer Single Curtain in White, 180x250cm, $69; Aruba Moss Indoor/Outdoor Rug, 200cm, $859; Hunter Abstract Wall Art, $369; Candy Stripe Olive Large Vase, $109; Noah Floor Lamp, $539; Yvonne Bubble Vase, Large, $119; Eadie Lifestyle Rockpool Cushion, White/Natural, $99; Eadie Lifestyle Muse White Cushion, $129; Aria Ivory Velvet Cushion, $49; all other items stylist's own.

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BEDROOM
customisation

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BEDSIDE STORAGE

Store all your essentials with the one-drawer (above left) or one-drawer, one-door bedside table (above right).

Choose your

TIMBER STAIN

Bring out the best in this bed's Victorian ash hardwood with your choice of eight stains.

Cable Beach Bed, Queen, $4,399; Cable Beach 1-Drawer 1-Door Bedside Table, $1,599; Cable Beach 1-Drawer Bedside Table, $1,359; Roderick Beige Rug, Large, 200x290cm, $1099; Montauk Table Lamp, $179; Salt & Pepper Amana Grey Tumbler, Set of 4, $69; Aura Maison Vintage Queen/King Khaki Coverlet, $349; Domayne Luxuries 1000TC White Sheet Set, Queen, $149; Ecology Dream White Standard Pillowcases, Set of 2, $64; Ecology Dream White European Pillowcases, $49 each; Layla Terracotta Cushion, $69 each; all other items stylist's own.

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VOGUE AUSTRALIA

Fiercely Florence

Florence Pugh wears a VETEMENTS jacket, dress, worn as top, and pants, all P.O.A. TIFFANY & CO. earrings, $2,000, and $20,500, and rings, top, $33,400, and other two, $12,600 each. Her own septum ring, flat and upper lobe earrings, all worn throughout.

LACHLAN BAILEY
ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

The shape of things to come

What does a day in the life of Florence Pugh – only 27 and already hailed as a once-in-a-generation acting talent – involve? Pottery, pastries and radical self-reflection, as Hannah-Rose Yee finds out.

Styled by Christine Centenera. Photographed by Lachlan Bailey.

BURBERRY hat, $1,890. TIFFANY & CO. earrings, $2,000, and $87,000. Her own Helix and flat earrings, worn throughout. All prices approximate; details at Vogue.com.au/WTB.

GUCCI dress, $14,500. TIFFANY & CO. earrings, $44,800, and rings, on right hand, $10,400, and on left hand, $8,650 each. LOEWE shoes, P.O.A.

LACHLAN BAILEY

ALAÏA dress, $4,390, and shoes, $2,089. TIFFANY & CO. earrings, $2,000, and $20,500, and rings, on right hand, from $12,600, and on left hand, $33,400.

VETEMENTS

LACHLAN BAILEY

VETEMENTS jacket, dress, worn as top, and pants, all P.O.A. TIFFANY & CO. earrings, on right ear, $2,000, and $87,000, and on left ear, $2,000, and $20,500, and rings, top, $33,400, and $12,600 each.

The text messages arrive first. A bridge is closed near Florence Pugh's house! The traffic in London is thick! It's a right old bugger! She is en route but might be a little late! She is so sorry! She's been in the car for an hour! She's technically at the address but can't find the entrance! And then there she is, Florence Pugh – 27, already Oscar-nominated and critically lauded beyond an actor's wildest dreams – looking as though she is exactly where she's meant to be.

In fairness to Pugh, I have chosen one of East London's most rabbit warren-like warehouses for our meeting point. It's here that Ana Kerin has her pottery studio Kana, where Pugh and I will spend the morning getting to grips with a mound of clay.

"It's a maze," the artist apologises, each turn revealing another layer of corridors, like an MC Escher painting but with more house plants. On every corner, items have been left outside various other studios to find a new creative home, or so the "Help yourself" signs say. "What am I helping myself to?" jokes Pugh with her raspy, spitfire cackle. (A terrifying headless mannequin; a tall, ridged, charcoal … pot?) Her arms are full. She's already juggling a thermos, a giant iPhone and a coffee but her bright green eyes are attuned to every possibility. She takes everything in.

Inside Kerin's studio, Pugh removes her rings with the studied practice of someone who has done this before. Her father used to bring home sacks of clay on the weekend for Pugh and her siblings to play with, she explains. Theirs was a creative household, raised in Spain and then Oxford, by an artist and restaurateur father and a dancer mother. (A note that must be shared: the Pughs *almost* relocated to Australia instead of Spain. Pugh was just two, but she vividly remembers the family travelling to Sydney, where she used a bucket to clear an ocean pool of bluebottles. "I remember the water was up to here," she says, hand at her neck.) "For Christmas, we'd get massive bits of paper to sketch on," Pugh recalls. "I think he was always trying to keep us inspired."

Later, Pugh studied ceramics at school where she was, by her own admission, only really good at one thing, which was acting. In her final year, aged just 16, she joined an open casting call for the coming-of-age film *The Falling*.

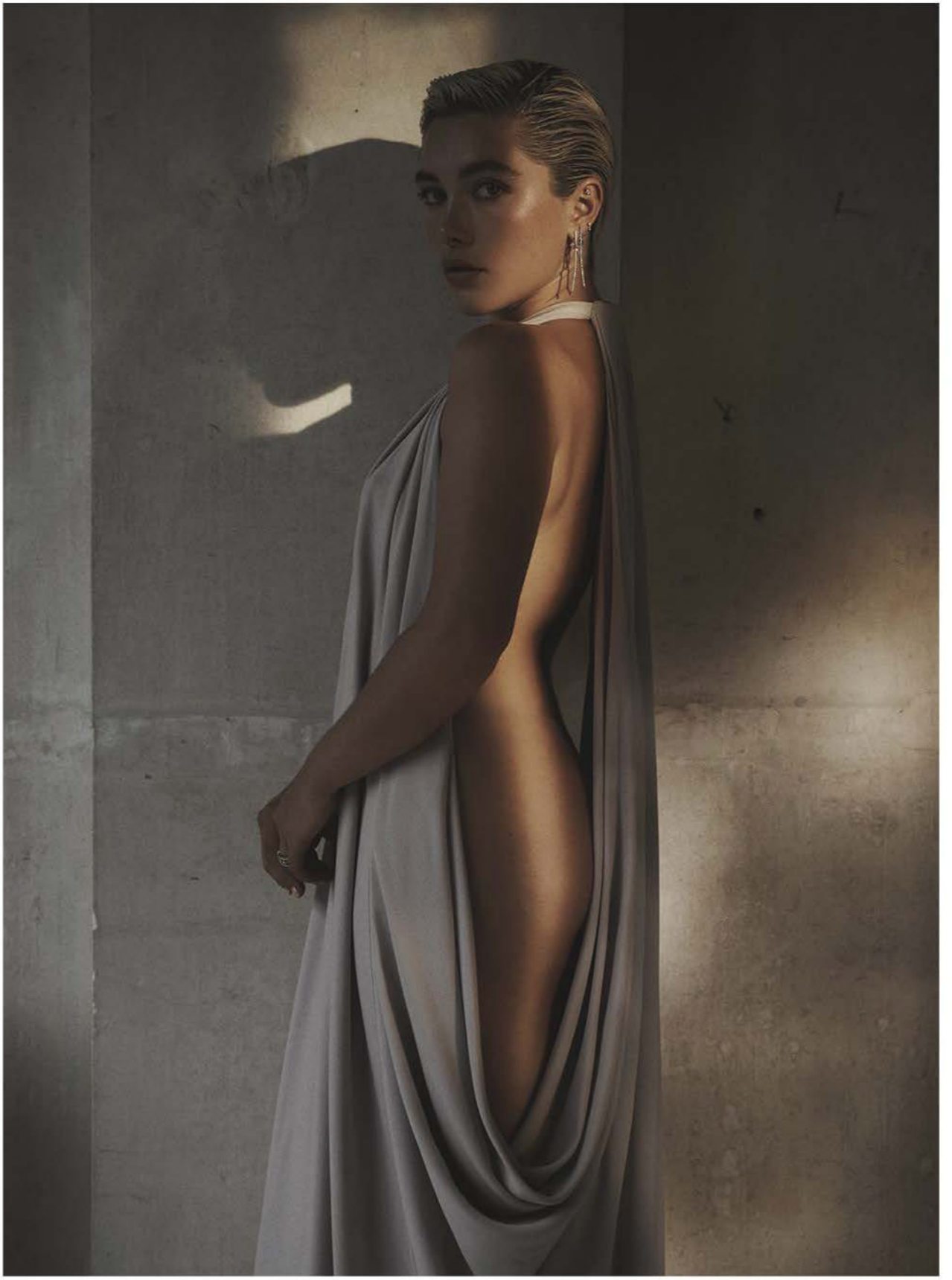
"It ended up starting my entire career and I'm glad I did it," Pugh reflects. "But I had two teachers who heavily suggested I shouldn't, 'cos I was definitely gonna fail to be an actor … And at this point, I'd been in every play, every school competition, every talent show. The only thing that I was good at at this school was the thing I'd just been given this opportunity for." Thankfully, notes Pugh, she has supportive parents, brimming with confidence in their tiny, talented daughter. "But it is scary, though," she admits.

Because – what if? What if Pugh hadn't done that movie? Hadn't then been cast in *Lady Macbeth*, the lauded period drama in which the actor, then 19, delivered a performance likened to a young Kate Winslet? Hadn't been electrifying in the psychological slow burn *Midsommar*? Hadn't completely re-evaluated one of the most despised literary characters in Greta Gerwig's *Little Women* and been Oscar nominated at just 24? Hadn't joined Marvel in *Black Widow* and stolen the movie right out from under Scarlett Johansson? Hadn't been branded by directors including Christopher Nolan and Denis Villeneuve as the singular acting talent of her generation?

Pugh shares this story matter-of-factly, her hands kneading an orange-sized ball of clay. She has already finished an elegant espresso cup that tapers into a delicate handle and which Kerin seizes upon excitedly with the unspoken acknowledgment that here, in Pugh, is a fellow artist. I have made something formless that, if squinting, might pass for what Kerin generously suggests could be a saké cup. "Don't be mean!" Pugh admonishes playfully at my piece. "He's lovely! He's trying!" (Pugh does everything playfully. When I offer to carry the coffee I hand over after we hug hello, she objects slyly, "No! I'll do my job now".)

Kerin does not use a wheel; her pieces are all worked by hand. And so that is what we are doing, too. At one point she directs us to close our eyes and craft a dish by touch. "Try to feel into it," Kerin advises. Next, we repeat the process, this time with our eyes open. I suggest that there's more pressure when I can see, as if I should be doing a better job. "That's your ego kicking in," Kerin replies, shrewdly. I look over at Pugh, who is silent, steadfastly focused on smoothing the clay with her thumbs, in quiet but resolute control. "I quite like watching it form," Pugh says contentedly, at last. "I get lost in it more. Being able to change it. And mould it."

An hour later, and we're off in search of pastries. "I would love a cinnamon bun and a cup of tea," says Pugh, and she's off, striding away in her "stompy" Valentino boots that still bear the scars of being dragged to three music festivals. Her outfit – black crop top stuffed by her mum into her Christmas stocking, wine-red leather jacket from Rouje, and absolutely tiny yellow sunglasses – is a little bit "Gwyneth Paltrow in *Sliding Doors*", she offers. Pugh views her style as a moveable feast, but in person, with her shock of spiky, bleached hair, she simply looks like the coolest girl you've ever seen. →



LACHLAN BAILEY

Opposite page: RODARTE dress, $6,550. **This page**: Valentino haute couture dress, P.O.A.
Tiffany & Co. earrings, $11,500, and rings, from $12,600, $33,400, and from $12,600.

MARC JACOBS dress, $11,015. TIFFANY & CO. earrings, $44,800, and rings, all P.O.A. BURBERRY shoes, $1,890.

LACHLAN BAILEY

After this Pugh is heading to the airport to pick up her dog Billie, who she shares with ex-boyfriend Zach Braff. She hasn't seen Billie in six months – "she's been with Dad" – and is giddy with anticipation. "I'm so excited," she grins. "I woke up this morning, you know when you have a date? And you're like, *eeee*!" she screws up her face gleefully. "I was like, *eeee*!"

While we walk, Pugh admits that the pandemic drove home to her the tyranny of separation; how for the first time the distance between Los Angeles, where she lived with Braff during their three-year relationship, and England, home to her family and so many of her friends, felt insurmountable. So she bought a house in South London, renovated it, hauled all of her stuff out of her parents' place and settled in. "Everything feels very grown up all of a sudden," says Pugh. She likes it.

"I've been someone who's been living out of bags and promising myself that I'd have a base for so long. And of course, I've had wonderful homes I'd been living in and relationships I was in that gave me new possibilities of homes. But I haven't had my base in London. So it was really nice to create that for myself."

We are sitting at Fabrique, a Swedish bakery specialising in cinnamon buns. We settle on two varieties – a sugar-doused vanilla bun and an aggressively spiced cardamom number – but Pugh is then so crestfallen at the prospect of not trying the classic cinnamon that she orders a third. She lets out a laugh – "This is actually a tasting interview!" – and leans in for a "sniff test". The cardamom needs filling with "spoonfuls" of custard and she enjoys the cinnamon, but the vanilla is her pick. "I do love the sugar," she sighs. "Did you ever do the 'Don't lick your lips contest' with the sugared doughnuts when you were younger? You gotta lie on the floor with your hands behind your back and you have to eat the doughnut as fast as you can without licking your lips." Was she good at it? Pugh beams triumphantly. "I won."

Nobody pays us much attention, even though we're on a busy street feeding directly into a train station. "I don't really think I'm *famous* famous," Pugh reflects. "I think it changed for me after *Little Women* and then we went straight into the pandemic and I had crippling anxiety, and I've never had any anxiety before. I actually didn't really know what it was. I was like, 'Isn't that just nerves?'" It was only when everything stopped that she realised she had been "running on a low level of anxiety every day". "That was when I acknowledged a difference in myself. I was like, 'Oh, this has changed. I know that people now know that I'm here.'" Her solution is, like most Pugh solutions, to be herself. "If you walk around looking the shit and feeling the shit and go into public areas, you're going to feel it, because people are going to be looking at you," she laughs. "But if you just be the normal person that you are and go to normal places … and move on with your life, then it's not going to feel doomed. But that's me on a good day."

We are in the uncharted waters of conducting an interview during the SAG-AFTRA strikes (in place at time of print), which means Pugh cannot talk about acting. She was supposed to be in Atlanta making *Thunderbolts*, the Marvel movie that sees her character team up with superheroes both legendary (Sebastian Stan's Bucky) and new (Harrison Ford as Thaddeus "Thunderbolt" Ross; it's like writing magnetic fridge poetry), but the strike shut down production over crucial negotiations for fair pay and usage.

"Obviously, we're all optimistic," she begins, "but it's been very sad what the take is, of who we are standing up for and what we want. It's been very frustrating to hear that sometimes the public think, 'Well don't they earn enough?' Or, 'Do they really need another mansion?' It's not about that," Pugh declares. "One thing that I'm so aware of is that it's affecting absolutely everyone that's even in the slightest way connected to [the industry]. The make-up artists, the costume designers, the drivers, the drycleaners. It's not just about writers and actors wanting to be listened to … It's the same thing with every profession that goes on strike. It's the belief that 'We get to keep it all. And you get to have the scraps that we decide to give you.'"

So, instead of work, we are talking about life. Pugh turns 28 in January; she is right in the middle of her astrological Saturn Return. (You bet she believes in it.) "It's definitely come and bitten me in the arse. In a good way," she clarifies. "Just, like, acknowledging behaviour that I'm not okay with anymore. I know I'm a full adult, but making decisions that are actually gonna benefit myself. Thinking with my head, not with my chest." Pugh says she has "done a lot of growing this summer". "And I've come out the other end feeling like I want to be more vulnerable and more understanding of what I need."

The vulnerability thing is new for Pugh. "I think I've always been honest and open," she says. "But that's not being vulnerable." Her collaborators have described her as "steely" (filmmaker Cate Shortland, director of *Black Widow*), someone with "firepower" (*Dune II* director Denis Villeneuve) and "unapologetically herself" (Johansson), and there's certainly a gung-ho gameness to her, as both actor and person. "Recently, I've definitely wanted to allow that other part of me, of not knowing how I feel, and not being okay, and not feeling strong, to also be a part of my character," she muses. "'Cos otherwise you find that you've been strong for years and helping other people for years and never actually requesting the love and care that you've been putting out there." Pugh isn't afraid to do this work of gently opening up; in fact, she's crafting this new self with her eyes wide open.

In April, she made her friendship with Valentino creative director Pierpaolo Piccioli official by becoming the brand's ambassador; in August, Pugh became Tiffany & Co.'s new face. She cherishes both partnerships. "I'm such a loud, gobby person that the match needs to be perfect, otherwise it's not going to look authentic," she says, barking out a laugh. "And it won't." Her quest for vulnerability also extends to the red carpet. "Because the easy thing to do is to wear a quaint dress," she explains. "Me showing who I am, and how loud I want to be, is also me being vulnerable." But despite the headlines – the sheer Valentino that showed her (gasp) nipples! The buzzcut at the Met Ball! – Pugh never feels pressure. "Dressing up is a form of creative inspiration, it's like a piece of my soul," she stresses. "I'm never in something that I don't wanna wear."

It's clear that creativity matters more to her than almost anything else. Pugh's London-life priorities are thus: "I want my head to be fed. I want to go and see more art. I want to create art." She is on the lookout for a pottery studio of her own, a throwback to her teenage studies, which taught her an important lesson. "If you make a mistake, you throw it back on the pile. It really doesn't matter." Whenever someone tells her she is an icon, or a role model to young women, she demurs. ("I'm not sure they should!") But the reality is that Pugh's self-acceptance is rare in Hollywood. "I want to continue shouting and being loud about my opinions and what's wrong in the industry, what's wrong with the treatment of women," she reflects. "But I also think with a term like [icon], you have to be very aware that you're not going to be able to always do that. You are going to fail, and you are gonna just have to hope that you're allowed to."

Pugh says this as our chat comes to a close, reminding me of an earlier moment in Kerin's studio. After choosing our pieces to take home – Pugh asks so nicely that Kerin lets her keep two, the cup and a little dish "for guac" – the artist instructs us to return the clay from our discarded objects to become something new. "I cannot squidge them for you," she says. "You have to do it. That's a good lesson." Torn over what to keep, I look over at Pugh. She has already cheerfully scrapped her unwanted pieces, rolling them together with a smile. ■

LACHLAN BAILEY

MAISON MARGIELA coat, $10,240, bodysuit, $5,855, socks, $715, and shoes, $2,120. TIFFANY & CO. earrings, on right ear, $2,000, and $87,000, and on left ear, $2,000, and $20,500, and rings, all P.O.A.

Hair: Peter Lux
Make-up: Lauren Parsons
Manicure: Sabrina Gayle
Production: Rosco

Goodbye Vogue House

As Vogue bids a fond farewell to its London headquarters, stars past, present and eternal come together for a leaving party like NO OTHER!!!

by Robin Muir
Photographs by Sean Thomas
Styling by Dena Giannini

Corridors of power dressing. British *Vogue* editor-in-chief and European editorial director Edward Enninful with contributing editor Naomi Campbell, who has been beguiling the pages of *Vogue* since the 1980s.

Naomi wears a SAINT LAURENT top, skirt, belt and shoes. GLENN SPIRO earrings.

In the occasionally unpredictable lifts, designer Riccardo Tisci meets Colombian superstar Shakira.

Riccardo wears a DICKIES shirt and pants. NIKE cap and sneakers. Shakira wears an ALPHA INDUSTRIES bomber jacket. WOLFORD bra. Mermaid tail, from Planet Mermaid. ELISSA POPPY gloves. Jewellery, from a selection at DINOSAUR DESIGNS, JESSICA McCORMACK, and MESSIKA.

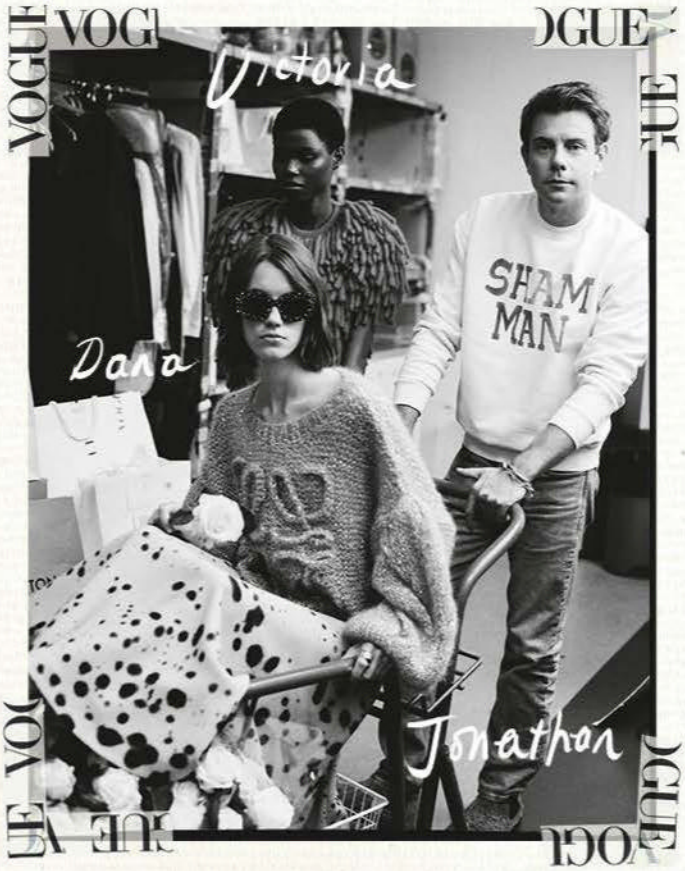
SEAN THOMAS

Speaking volumes. Stella McCartney, who as a student was a frequent visitor to the Library, checks in with *Vogue* historian and contributing editor Robin Muir.

Model Victoria Fawole wears a STELLA McCARTNEY jacket, skirt and boots. POMELLATO earrings.

Cover versions. Precious Lee outside the editor-in-chief's office.

SAINT LAURENT jacket and earring. WOLFORD turtleneck. BOSS skirt. HEDOINE tights.



In the post room, fashion designer Jonathan Anderson pushes on with models Dana Smith and Victoria.

Dana wears a LOEWE sweater, skirt, sunglasses and ring. Victoria wears a JW ANDERSON sweater.

In the British *Vogue* fashion cupboard, Kate Moss, the magazine's most prolific cover star (45 and counting ...), with long-term co-conspirators hairstylist Sam McKnight and global contributing fashion editor Kate Phelan.

Kate wears a GUCCI dress. MANOLO BLAHNIK sandals. CARTIER ring.

Global editorial director Anna Wintour in the boardroom with models Fran Summers, Nora Attal and Lila Moss.

Nora wears a CHANEL haute couture skirt suit and scarf. Fran wears a CHANEL haute couture blouse, skirt and belt. CHANEL High Jewellery earrings. Lila wears a GIAMBATTISTA VALLI haute couture bralette and skirt. VAN CLEEF & ARPELS necklace. CHANEL High Jewellery ring.

SEAN THOMAS

Actor Gemma Chan in the managerial wing, surrounded by portraits from the magazine's past.
LOUIS VUITTON dress, balloon sleeves, earrings and boots.

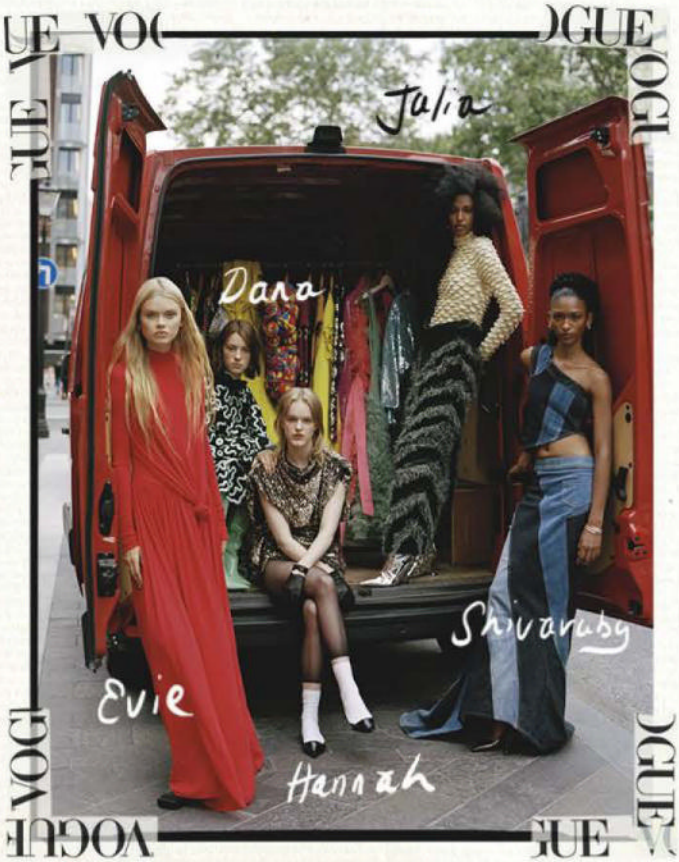
One for the pages. Dior and Fendi supremo Kim Jones with the editor-in-chief's collection of reference books.

Victoria wears a FENDI couture dress. CARTIER earrings. CHAUMET ring. CHOPARD ring. Mika Schneider wears a FENDI couture dress and boots. BUCCELLATI earrings. GLENN SPIRO bracelet.

SEAN THOMAS

Creative director Sarah Burton, set to depart Alexander McQueen after 26 years, drops by the *Vogue* art department.

Nyagua Ruea wears an ALEXANDER McQUEEN dress, clutch and jewellery. Florence Huntington-Whiteley wears an ALEXANDER McQUEEN pants-suit.



All aboard with *Vogue* fashion director Julia Sarr-Jamois.

Evie Harris wears a PROENZA SCHOULER dress. Dana wears a BOTTEGA VENETA top, skirt and boots. Hannah Motler wears a MARC JACOBS mini-dress, gloves, tights, socks and shoes. Julia wears a BOTTEGA VENETA turtleneck, skirt, earring and boots. Shivaruby wears an AHLUWALIA top and skirt. SAINT LAURENT shoes.

At the Vogue House loading bay, models Alva Claire, Lulu Wood and Ugbad Abdi, contributing editor and actor Riz Ahmed and editor-in-chief of *The World of Interiors*, Hamish Bowles.

Alva wears a EMILIA WICKSTEAD bustier and skirt. WITH NOTHING UNDERNEATH shirt. VAINCOURT belt. MANOLO BLAHNIK shoes. Riz wears a PAUL SMITH tuxedo suit. HAWES & CURTIS shirt and cummerbund. BOSS bow tie. MANOLO BLAHNIK shoes. Lulu wears an ERDEM jacket, cardigan (tied at shoulders), and skirt. MARIA LA ROSA socks. ROGER VIVIER shoes. Ugbad wears a RICHARD QUINN jacket and skirt. ERDEM sweater. HAUTE HIJAB headscarf.

EVIE WEARS CARTIER EARRING. TIFFANY & CO. RINGS. HANNAH WEARS A CARTIER WATCH. SHIVARUBY WEARS BULGARI EARRINGS AND BRACELET. LULU WEARS VINTAGE 4ELEMENT EARRINGS. JESSICA MCCORMACK BRACELET AND RING.

Letter perfect: Linda Evangelista strikes a pose outside the post room.

ALEXANDER McQUEEN trench coat. VERSACE shirt. FALKE tights. TIFFANY & CO. ear clips. BY FAR shoes.

SEAN THOMAS

In the hot seat. Cara Delevingne tries the editor-in-chief's chair out for size.

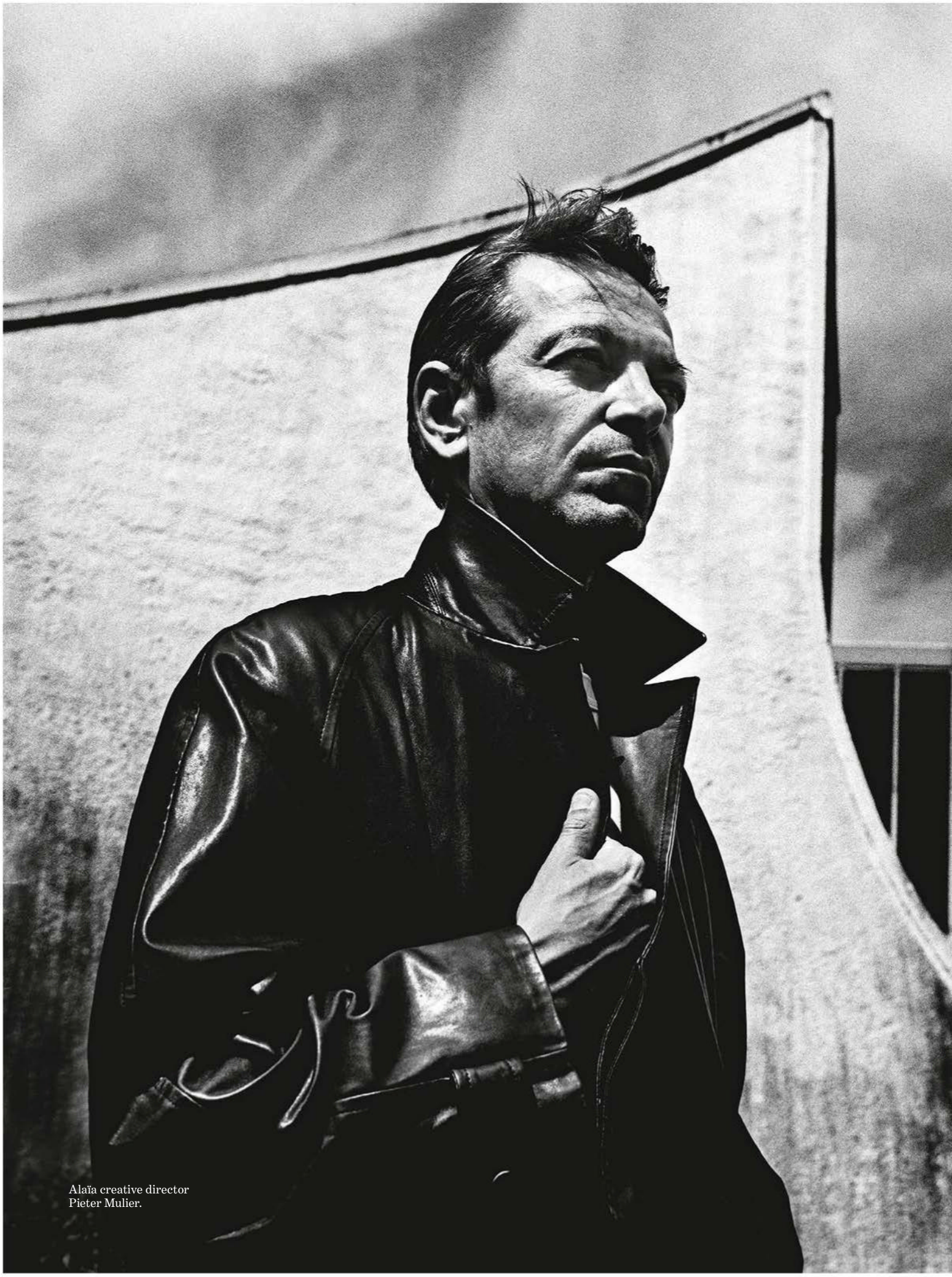
VALENTINO haute couture shirt, jeans, earrings and shoes.

Out on the street: on the corner of Hanover Square, Adut Akech Bior, Karen Elson and Mona Tougaard stand by *Vogue*'s bespoke newsagents, Condé Nast Worldwide News.

Adut wears a CHANEL jacket, dress and bangle. Karen wears a FENDI couture dress. Mona wears a CHANEL jacket and dress.

SEAN THOMAS

HAIR: STELIOS CHONDROS. MAKE UP: KANAKO YOSHIDA. MANICURE: PEBBLES AIKENS. DANA, MONA & HANNAH'S MAKE UP: MIRIJANA VASOVIC. ANNA'S HAIR: MAX COLES. ANNA'S MAKE UP: NARIMAN. SHAKIRA'S HAIR: LIAM CURRAN. NAOMI'S HAIR: LORENZO BARCEL. NAOMI'S MAKE UP: ESTHER EDEME. NAOMI & GEMMA'S NAILS: MICHELLE CLASS. KATE MOSS'S HAIR: SAM McKNIGHT. KATE MOSS, ALVA & SHIVARUBY'S MAKE UP: TAMZIN CUMMINGS. GEMMA'S HAIR: NEIL MOODIE. GEMMA'S MAKE UP: JOEY CHOY. RIZ & HAMISH'S GROOMING: TARA HICKMAN. EVIE, LULU, JONATHAN, UGBAD & VICTORIA'S MAKE UP: KOM RIDOUT. KIM'S GROOMING: ANNA PAYNE. ADUT, KAREN, LINDA & MONA'S MAKE UP: HOLLY SILIUS. STELLA'S HAIR: EAMONN HUGHES. STELLA'S MAKE UP: CHYNARA KOJOEVA. BRAIDERS: EMMA ABUDU, TINA SHANICE, JAMIQUE WEBB. SET DESIGN: MIGUEL BENTO. FLOWERS: ALEXANDER YOUNG. PRODUCTION: THE CURATED. DIGITAL ARTWORK: MATTHEW RICHARDS. MODELS: UGBAD ABDI, RIZ AHMED, ADUT AKECH BIOR, JONATHAN ANDERSON, NORA ATTAL, HAMISH BOWLES, SARAH BURTON, NAOMI CAMPBELL, GEMMA CHAN, ALVA CLAIRE, CARA DELEVINGNE, KAREN ELSON, EDWARD ENNINFUL, LINDA EVANGELISTA, VICTORIA FAWOLE, EVIE HARRIS, FLORENCE HUNTINGTON WHITELEY, KIM JONES, PRECIOUS LEE, STELLA McCARTNEY, SAM McKNIGHT, KATE MOSS, LILA MOSS, HANNAH MOTLER, ROBIN MUIR, KATE PHELAN, JULIA SARR JAMOIS, SHAKIRA, SHIVARUBY, DANA SMITH, FRAN SUMMERS, RICCARDO TISCI, MONA TOUGAARD, ANNA WINTOUR, LULU WOOD. WITH THANKS TO DEREK COULTON.



Alaïa creative director
Pieter Mulier.

HAIR: SHINGO SHIBATA. MAKE-UP: KANAKO TAKASE
MODELS: JEANNE CADIEU, VICTORIA FAWOLE, AWAR ODHIANG
ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE. DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

Alaïa anew

Following the legendary Azzedine Alaïa seemed all but impossible. Then Pieter Mulier came along. Nathan Heller meets the designer with an eye for the past, and a vision for the future.

Styled by Alex Harrington. Photographed by Anton Corbijn.

In the moments before the start of Alaïa's ready-to-wear show in Paris in July, the house's creative director since 2021, Pieter Mulier, stood out among the team for his ease and calm. He spent some minutes chatting with his backstage visitors. He wandered over to the make-up room, found he wasn't needed, and sat on a curb with Australian model Julia Nobis to smoke Marlboro Golds and talk. Shows weren't always so comfortable – his last one, held within his own apartment, in Antwerp, had driven him into a nervous state – but this one announced Mulier's advancement to a master's station. The runway would be the Passerelle Léopold-Sédar-Senghor, spanning the Seine between the Tuileries and the Musée d'Orsay.

This bridge was one of the city's quiet marvels of engineering, and, as the sun aligned with a western breeze, it exemplified the warm and precise refinement that has given Mulier's work at Alaïa its magnetic appeal. "I try to keep a little bit of the family aspect of Alaïa in the studio,' Mulier says. "Everything is on a human scale." At 44, Mulier is at once a new arrival in the firmament of creative directors – Alaïa is the first house he has led – and one of fashion's ensconced steady hands. For 16 years he served as Raf Simons's deputy and sounding board, moving along with his mentor's career as it rose towards ever-larger labels and distinguishing himself not only by his creative point of view but by his skill in managing large teams. When he was picked to succeed the Tunisian-born designer Azzedine Alaïa, who died in 2017 after reimagining the language of body-conscious tailoring, many wondered whether Mulier could finesse the transition, teasing forth the brand's fragile magic while pushing his own fresher vision through. "Alaïa felt so specific to Azzedine and to that time that it seemed it was going to be impossible for it to happen again" says Julianne Moore, who found herself rejoining the collection waiting lists after Mulier's debut in the summer of 2021. "Pieter managed to do it."

In person, Mulier is tall and skinny, with a boyish whoosh of hair just greying and a teenager's spidery way of dangling his forearms from cocked elbows. He dresses most days in white or black sweatshirts and jeans (no logos) and leads his house in the spirit of a team captain, calling plays from the field and cheering colleagues on. At a fitting two days earlier, he kept the show music cranked up and struck prattling conversations with the models as they entered. "When you're waiting for your fitting, all you hear is 'Wow!' and clapping," says the model Élise Crombez, who grew up half an hour from Mulier. "It was as if every girl was specifically chosen for her outfit – you felt like a person, not just a number walking down the runway." Mulier himself wears the same white atelier coat as his staffers backstage, an egalitarian gesture that matches his straightforward manner: he is Flemish, and can seem as buoyant and pellucid as a glass of summer ale. His approach to the craft, though, is rarely so simple. Even beyond his workday, Mulier haunts galleries and artists' studios, compiles scrapbooks and archives and picks apart garments like old radios to understand the way they work. Where some designers operate as inward-turned iconoclasts, he sees his fashion as one offering in the long, shared practice of forming a point of view about ambitious art.

"I still think fashion should propose something, say something – because it's part of culture," Mulier says. The theme of the bridge show, inspired by Mulier's fascination with the clock of the Musée d'Orsay, is time. He saw reclaiming time as urgent in an increasingly 'grammed-and-forgotten fashion world. Unlike most houses, Alaïa still shows only twice a year; in the 90s, Mulier observes, Azzedine was known to cancel shows at the last minute if he deemed the work unready. If taking time was Alaïa's superpower, Mulier thought, why not celebrate that on the runway? →

When he thought about clocks, he envisioned buttons. "I quite like the idea that you need time to get dressed – and you need time to get *undressed*," he says. If the moment of doing up buttons was one of self-making, empowerment, their undoing measured out erotic time. This focus on the physicality of clothing and the body was itself very Alaïa, Mulier thought. His invitation package to the show had been unconventional – a three-legged folding chair that guests were told to bring with them. Now the grandees of the fashion world are arrayed along the bridge in their makeshift seating, which seems a statement about transience and environmental use, but also an impish gesture of democratisation. "I *love* the idea of the fashion crowd walking with a camping chair through the most bourgeois area of Paris," Mulier says.

A breeze comes up; the garments dance. There are autumn coats and hoods and hats paired with sheer vinyl skirts and dresses. There are translucent plissé pieces in black and beautifully tailored white. There are haunting yellowy pinks and blues and earth tones, blouses with high collars and sharp cut-outs, corsets, leggings, trousers cut in the Alaïa silhouette, wrapped boots, leather suspenders and an exquisite amber-coloured vinyl overcoat. Alaïa makes a point of melding ready-to-wear and couture into a single retail collection, and its garments are famous for their unusual construction: they are designed directly on the human body, built like houses from the inside out with proprietary dynamic-tailoring techniques.

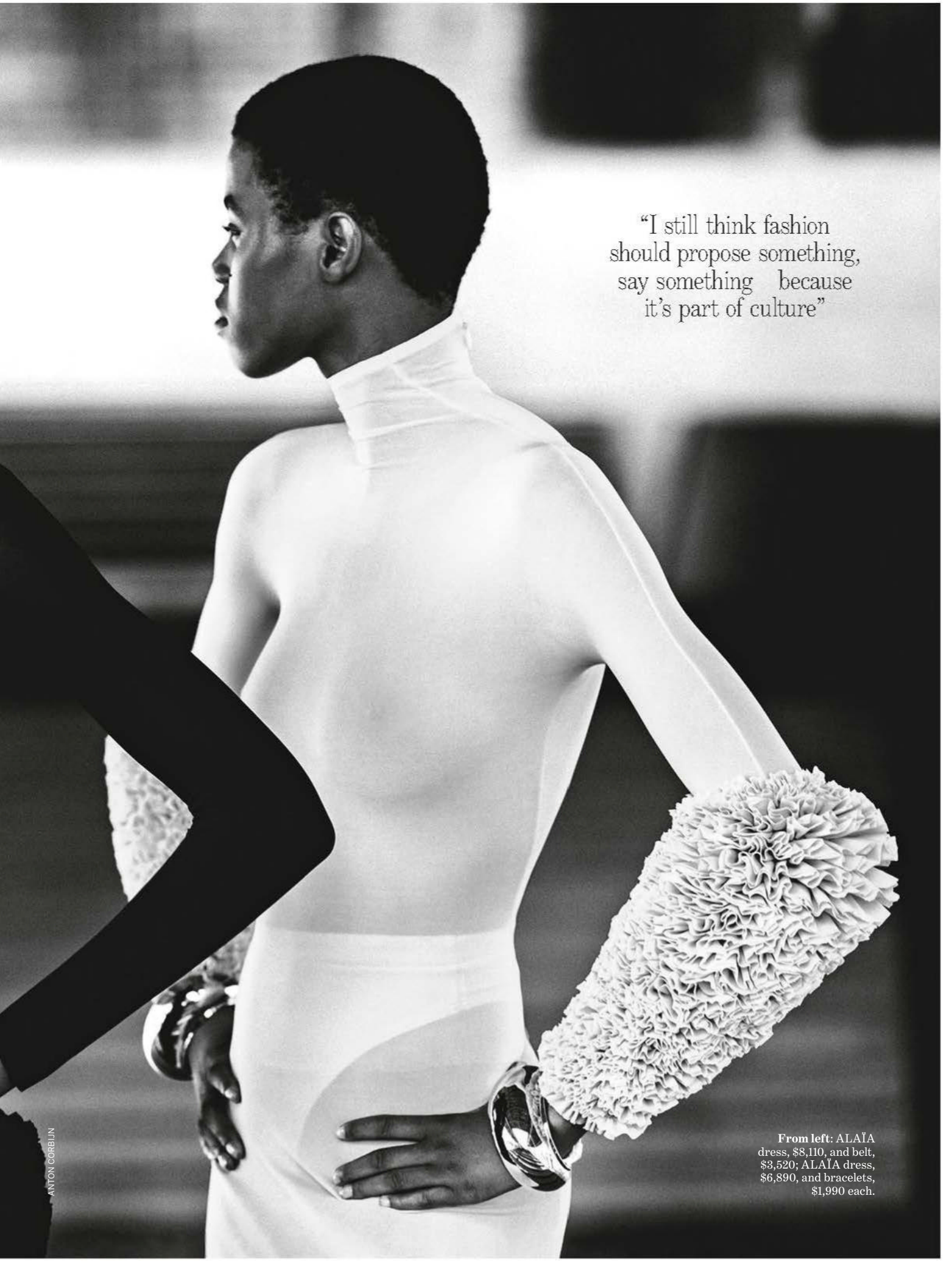
Many wearers suggest they'd know the *feel* of an Alaïa dress with their eyes closed. "They hug you," Crombez explains. "It grabs you, " Mulier agrees. "They don't just hang. In French we say *tenu* – you're held together." He takes this also as a mission statement for the house, which employs a tight, close-fitted four-person design team and four small specialty ateliers – tailoring, draping, knitwear and leather.

A couple of days after the show, Mulier is back in Antwerp, where he's lived for two decades, feeling upbeat. "It's fantastic!" he exclaims as he heads to lunch. The restaurant, Veranda, faces a concrete train overpass. The founder is his friend the chef Davy Schellemans, whom Mulier has repeatedly enlisted to cook for Alaïa's most honoured guests. Mulier loves amazing things nested just slightly off the beaten path, greatness that doesn't advertise itself but attracts a devout community of people who bother to take the time to look.

In Mulier's view, Alaïa's golden age was the 80s to the 90s, when Azzedine created a new language that both revealed and mystified a woman's curves. Azzedine blended light, classically feminine materials with tougher ones, such as leather. There was knitwear tailored like a jacket, at once tidy, professional and sensual: a revelation at the time, and one of the most lasting profiles of the 80s. "Azzedine was a *tailor*," Mulier says, the key, he thinks, to the work's blend of femininity and strength. "He brought ease to sex appeal – which is unbelievable." This sex was never compromising; it was French.

By the end of Azzedine's life, Mulier thinks, the nectar had soured. "Alaïa became a little bit the *vestiaire* of the bourgeoisie," he says. "I remember going to art fairs and every gallerist was dressed in Alaïa – the same dress with the same shoe. It's never good if you become the synonym of 'good taste'." The brand had lost the young and restless. "Kids didn't know what Alaïa was," Mulier says. "The mother was wearing it; the daughter was not."

It became clear to Mulier that his mandate was to get back the young, daring spirit that had made Azzedine a revolutionary and sensation. Shoulders and arms were cut much too tightly for the contemporary woman, he thought; he brought them out. Jackets had a way of ending up more sculptural than comfortable, so he opened up and modernised their lines. →



"I still think fashion should propose something, say something because it's part of culture"

ANTON CORBIJN

From left: ALAÏA dress, $8,110, and belt, $3,520; ALAÏA dress, $6,890, and bracelets, $1,990 each.

ALAÏA coat, $25,250,
and belt, $1,820.

He added product categories at lower price points – swimwear, eyewear, underwear – to welcome younger consumers. And he tried to bring the sexy back.

After pecking at a strawberry sorbet – "Fan-*tastic*!" – Mulier heads outside to light a cigarette, then climbs into the back of a black mini-van that ferries him around. Mulier usually comes to Paris for the work week and returns to Antwerp for the weekend, by train or by car. On his way home, he stops off at the extensively renovated Royal Museum of Fine Arts to marvel, as he sometimes does, at Flemish painting.

"My favourite one is that one," he says, pausing before Rubens's triptych *Epitaph of Nicolaas Rockox* and *His Wife Adriana Perez*. Why? "It's small," he says. "I quite like Rubens when it's small."

Not far away is a gallery filled with the vivid, dreamlike expressionist canvases of James Ensor. "He's one of my favourite painters," Mulier offers, slowing before *The Skeleton Painter*, which shows a deathly skeleton behaving as an artist. He adds, offhandedly, "He was actually born where I am from." Mulier grew up in Ostend, a seaside resort town in west Belgium that he describes as "surreal". "They always say that people in Ostend are very creative, and a bit crazy," he says. His extended family was from Bruges; his father was a doctor, and Ostend, with its wealth of health spas and casinos, needed personnel. Mulier, who has an older brother and a sister, describes himself as a "very social, very easy" child, albeit one without broad skills. "My brother was a big football player, tennis player, rugby player – every ball he got in his hand," Mulier says. "My father was frustrated that I didn't have that." Instead, he gravitated toward crafts, drawing, piano lessons, drama class. He revered his mother's father, a shirt-maker on commission to the Belgian monarchy, who managed 300 seamstresses. "I always thought that he was an artist more than a businessman, " Mulier says. "He spoke seven languages. He lived in modernist houses."

A tailor's dummy in Mulier's studio.

To the young Mulier, this urbane shirt-maker seemed the height of worldliness, a figure steeped in art and bigger dreams. "What I learned from him was that you can do whatever you want in life," he says. Yet it never occurred to him to follow his grandfather into the garment trade. At 11, Mulier went off to the Abdijschool van Zevenkerken, a Benedictine institution outside Bruges. Boarding there during the week, he learned Latin and Greek and the basics of art appreciation; he made friends with whom he remains close. Mulier describes himself, during these years, as a happy, straight-edged provincial Northern European schoolboy with a straight-edged future.

He was in the Boy Scouts until the age of 19, at which point, at the suggestion of his parents, he went to law college in Leuven, rooming with boarding-school chums who'd done the same. Yet the study of law failed to excite him, while architecture did. So after two years, he switched to architecture school, at the Institut Saint-Luc, in Brussels. It proved a revelation. "It was the beginning of my world becoming bigger," he says. Mulier's urbane girlfriend at the time, at pains to broaden his taste, led him through a world of art. "She took me to every gallery, all the museums and fashion stores." The only living designer Mulier had ever heard of then was Dries Van Noten, but his girlfriend had pictures of the newest Raf Simons collections on her walls. They were students together. One design course required a final project on the theme of "survival". Simons had agreed to sit on the exam jury. "You had a lot of the people in school making, I don't know, jewellery rings so that if they got attacked in the street they could knock a person down, stuff like that," Simons recalls. Mulier interpreted the prompt quite differently and showed up wearing a bodysuit that would supposedly ensure survival of any job interview. Strapped into a one-piece garment, with no shirts to come untucked or flies to come undone, the idea went, a job candidate was freed from unwitting self-sabotage.

Simons did a double take. "It was a completely different way of thinking," he says. As Mulier remembers it, Simons came up after the exam to offer Mulier his card. Simons proposed that Mulier visit his atelier in Antwerp – an invitation that Mulier recalls answering with polite indifference. "Then my girlfriend said, 'Oh, yes, you're going,'" he explains. Three months later, knowing almost nothing about fashion, Mulier showed up in Antwerp to begin the internship that changed his life.

The city of Antwerp is at once human-scaled and expansive, encompassing the second-largest harbour in Europe. Its old centre extends from squares of gorgeous Flemish townhouses; its more recently rebuilt regions have an industrial air, traced with green. In 2014, Mulier bought the penthouse of the Riverside Tower, a concrete modernist icon designed by Léon Stynen and Paul De Meyer and completed in 1972, on the city's "left bank" – a parky residential flatland that Le Corbusier once tried to lay out as an ideal neighbourhood.

Mulier spent two years renovating the apartment with the help of the architect Glenn Sestig and the landscaper Martin Wirtz, who designed him a distinctive rooftop garden. And he filled it with new art: Tim Breuer, Bendt Eyckermans, Steven Shearer, and much more. A favourite word of Mulier's is extreme, and the penthouse, which looks out both on downtown Antwerp and on the waterfront, is proudly that. Every species of plant in the garden, Mulier says, was chosen because it had survived the explosion at Hiroshima.

When Mulier is in residence, he wakes at a quarter to seven, makes breakfast, and returns to wake his dog, John John, who sleeps with him in bed. They walk together for an hour in the nearby woods. At home, he showers and starts sending emails. If it's a workday, he's at it from 9am to somewhere between 7pm and 9pm; then he and John John walk again, and he meets friends for dinner, or cooks – one of his favourite things. By 11 or 12, he's back in bed. Zoom was, for him, the best thing to come from the pandemic. He has not set foot in New York since 2019, when →

ANTON CORBIJN, FRANÇOIS HALARD

he and Simons and his former partner of 16 years, the designer Matthieu Blazy, all living there, left Calvin Klein. "I was so happy in New York," he says. "It would break my heart to go back."

On free Sundays, he visits his brother and his sister and their families around Ostend. ("I love kids," he says. "I always wanted kids, because it brings balance to a life – reality when you are in an industry like this. But I would never do it alone.")

He adores Antwerp, but has always, he says, experienced it from a slight social distance. A lesson he feels he learned from Simons, who taught him to approach the city through its artistic underground over his first year at the label – a period when Mulier learned basic skills like pattern making and contract management and felt, he maintains, "completely lost creatively".

"I'd gone from a law school to an architect school to a company in Antwerp that dresses skinny boys? The first show I saw from Raf, I was like, 'What is this?' My father saw a picture and said, 'That's what you do?'" And yet, at Simons's label, Mulier underwent a kind of bloom. He lived for a year in the office, sleeping on a mattress underneath the archive. Simons brought on Blazy, another young designer, and in time, as Mulier came to acknowledge his sexuality, the two of them started to date. They found joy in being part of a team of scrappy kids who spent hours in the studio, living inside art and design and, from a quiet Belgian city, making work that enthralled the entire fashion world.

"Raf used to bring us all to the Frieze art fair, to Art Basel, and have us look at things that, honestly, I'd never seen before, and explain why they were important," he recalls. "I believe that everybody in life has one person who does that for you … I had it when I met Raf – that person who pushes you so far out of your comfort zone that it changes everything." By the time Simons commuted to Milan to work at Jil Sander, Mulier, who did the brand's shoes and accessories, was known as his right hand.

"It was a very interesting combination," says Blazy, who is now creative director at Bottega Veneta, "because Raf would think in terms of concept, where Pieter would think immediately as an architect: in volumes, colours, product." When designing, Mulier drew in profile – "You could see the volume of the clothes," says Blazy, who internalised this sidelong method – and created his shoes bottom-up, as if designing a building.

All the while, Mulier dreamed of designing womenswear. When he realised, deep into his 30s, that the closest he had come was making women's shoes, he had a kind of crisis and decided to launch his own womenswear line. It was 2010 and, as he was ramping up the collection, his father became terminally ill. Mulier paused the work. "I took care of him for six, seven months until he passed away," he says. By then, Simons was moving to Dior and invited Mulier to join – this time, he'd work on womenswear, including couture, an offer he could not bear to refuse. "I knew after a week at Dior," recalls Mulier, "that *this* is what I wanted to do."

It was at Dior that Mulier's quiet genius for colour, volume and construction – the material personality of a garment – came to the fore. "He was interested and challenged by the technicality," Simons says. Dior – like Alaïa – was a tailoring-based house, and it was where Mulier learned the power of a recognisable silhouette: the box (Chanel), the hourglass (Dior), the long hourglass he would one day master at Alaïa. As Mulier tells it, though, Dior was most of all where he learned how to sell a dream. "It was about curves," he says. "It was about attitude." The lesson lodged in his imagination even as, in 2016, he and Blazy joined Simons in New York to lead design at Calvin Klein – a resume bump for Mulier, who was listed (and paid) as the brand's creative director, and a crucial window into the inner workings of both global commerce and, he notes in earnest, underwear.

The Antwerp trio was alive with an ambitious dream: they were going to take sublime, smart, daring, first-rate fashion and make it globally available. But the radiance of a candle burning at both ends, filled with almost nonstop travel among Europe, the US and Asia. "You'd arrive in Amsterdam in the morning and have 50 people in front of you with 24 hours to work with them – and you'd have to give them energy," he explains. "You'd clean it up, leave, and come back every three weeks to do it again."

By the time the project ended, "I was just burnt up". For a year, he turned down job offers. During the pandemic, he considered becoming creative director of a Swiss furniture company. It was at this point that Alaïa came into view.

"I had this idea that Pieter should go to Alaïa," Clémande Burgevin Blachman, who had known Mulier at Raf Simons and Calvin Klein, recalls. Her mother had been a close friend of Azzedine; she thought she saw, in Mulier, a designer who could bring the house to life again with the old energy. "I knew he had this way of looking at the feminine body – maybe it's because of his background as an architect – and this cultural and art knowledge," she says. "I convinced him he should find a way to apply." The application process lasted a full year. "We were dating," Mulier says wryly. What he recognised in Alaïa, long before a lot of other people did, was a house that joined the intimacy and particularity of Raf Simons, the refined ateliers and dream-making of Dior, and the demotic openness of Calvin Klein. He became convinced it was the lead job he was made for. Over 12 months, he ordered vintage Alaïa garments and studied their construction, learning Azzedine's language in cloth.

When Mulier and Blazy were together in Antwerp, they often ended their days at De Zeester, a tavern-style restaurant near his apartment. Tonight Mulier takes a round table and orders croquettes, mussels and a *bolleke*, or goblet bowl, of local beer.

The pair had the fortune and the misfortune of each seeing their luckiest breaks – a chance to lead, at last, the world-class fashion house that each believed in – appear at almost the same time. For years, they had been partners in deputy-ship, then overnight, each had become the sovereign of his own imaginative world.

The weight of two such new mantles, based in two cities, with two chief calendars and desperate drives to squeeze the most from a rare opportunity, was more than one relationship could bear. "Once you obtain that job, you have to make some choices in your life, because it eats a lot of everything around you," Mulier says. He chose Alaïa, Blazy chose Bottega Veneta, and the rest was sealed. Today, the two of them are still among the most enthusiastic fans at each other's shows.

"What I like about Pieter's way of working is that he goes against the stream, takes risks, but he's not someone who wants to shock – he's just going for what he believes in most," Blazy says. But they remain apart. "It didn't work anymore, based only on that – only on the jobs," Mulier says.

A loss, though, has been balanced by wild success. At Alaïa, the vision that Mulier most believes in has the public heart. His first collection alone turned the fortunes of the house around. A set of hoods that he updated from an early Alaïa model worn by Grace Jones sold and sold and sold – a fashion icon right out of the gate. "It represents Alaïa in a very simple way, and every big house copied it," Mulier notes. "It's one of those pieces that made other brands look at Alaïa again."

They are still looking and, more than two years later, the hoods continue to sell dazzlingly well. Success is generally worth waiting for, at least in Mulier's view. "We're a small company. It takes a lot of time," he says. He smiles, then shrugs. After two decades of biding his own time for the right big break, he was used to taking opportunities in pace. Now he had all the past to work with, and the future. "I'm *very* patient," Mulier explains. ■

ANTON CORBIJN

ALAÏA coat, $7,650, top, P.O.A., skirt $9,950, and earrings, $1,360.

Run this town

London's melting-pot energy and Burberry's storied heritage is something creative director Daniel Lee is fusing to electric, street-wise effect at the British house.

Styled by Harriet Crawford. Photographed by Lorenz Schmidl.

IN COLLABORATION WITH BURBERRY

Opposite page: BURBERRY duck-print dress, $3,890, ribbed turtleneck top, $2,500, and embroidered B Chess shoulder bag, $4,500. **This page**: BURBERRY rose-print hooded coat, $13,000, rose-print jacket, $3,500, rose-print pants, $2,500, and pointy mules, P.O.A. All prices approximate; details at Vogue.com.au/WTB.

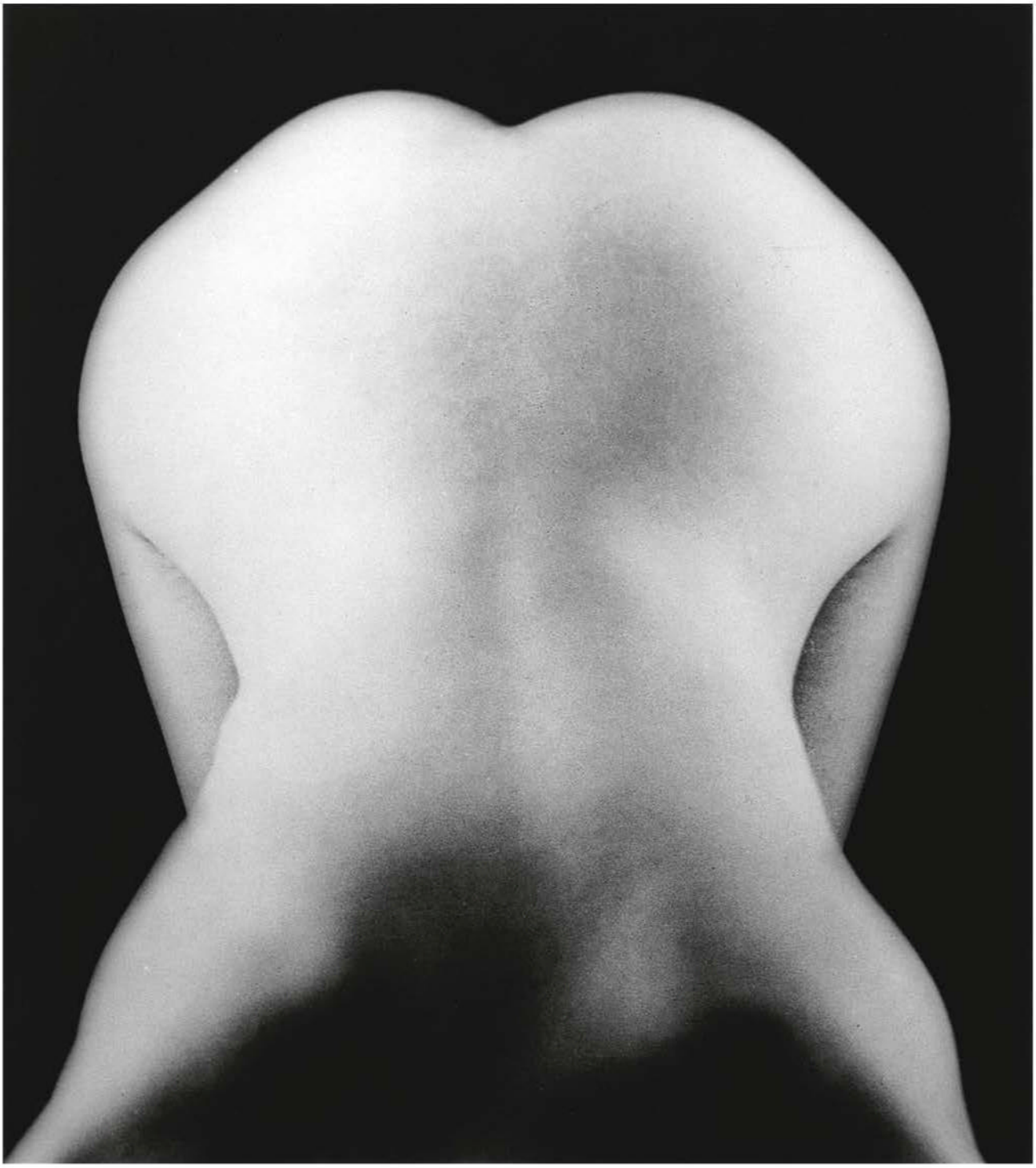
LORENZ SCHMIDL

BURBERRY rose-print gown, $10,500, medium Knight bag, $5,900, rose-print tights, $510, and stirrup pumps, P.O.A.

Above: BURBERRY argyle intarsia sweater dress, $2,950, Shield shoulder bag, $4,500, silver and gold-plated Hollow cuff, $1,150,and silver Hollow Layer ring, P.O.A. **Below**: BURBERRY swan-print scarf top, $3,450, swan-print pyjama pants, $3,990, rose-print tights, $510, and pointy mules, $1,450.

This page: BURBERRY hooded parka, $5,850, houndstooth hooded dress, P.O.A., houndstooth stretch tights, $1,000, and stirrup tall boots, P.O.A. **Opposite page**: BURBERRY jacket, $2,990, jeans, $2,990, gold-plated hoop earrings, $1,150, EKD jacquard extra large tote, $3,300, and pointy mules, $1,450.
Hair: Christopher Gatt. Make-up: Wendy Turner. Production: A Creative Partner. Model: Hayett Belarbi-McCarthy.

LORENZ SCHMIDL



Photographs by Lee Miller. **This page**: *Nude bent forward*, Paris, circa 1930. **Opposite page**: *Portrait of Space*, Al Bulwayeb, Egypt, 1937.

Courage under fire

Lee Miller was many things: fashion photographer, surrealist artist, trailblazing correspondent behind enemy lines for *Vogue* during World War II. Now, her inimitable life is the subject of both a new film and the first Australian exhibition of her work. By Hannah-Rose Yee.

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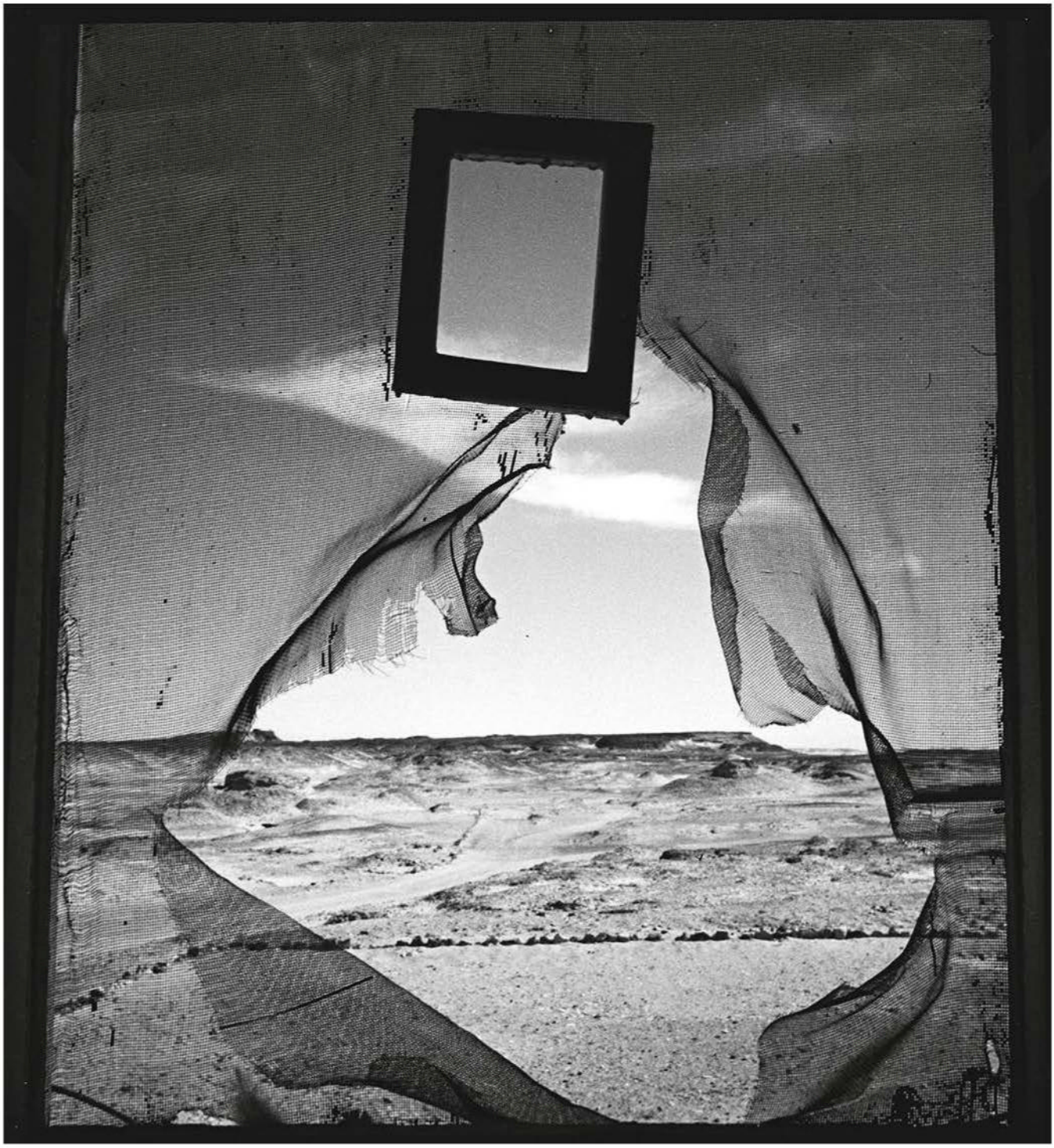

If Lee Miller was to have taken a photograph of you, this is how she would have done it. "The Rolleiflex was her camera," says Antony Penrose, Miller's son, "which you operate from down here." He holds a phantom Rolleiflex to his chest as we sit opposite each other with cups of tea at the kitchen table at Farleys. It is the Sussex home where Penrose grew up and which now serves as the museum and archive of Miller's life and work taken over the course of her career as a surrealist artist, fashion photographer for *Vogue* and, later, during World War II, the magazine's fearless war correspondent.

"She was a little bit bossy, a lot funny, and very engaging. She'd set everything up and she'd be chatting away to you," Penrose continues, "and at the moment when you had the expression that she wanted, when you were the most relaxed … *Click*. "And then she would wind on to the next one without looking at the camera. She knew what she was doing," he reflects. "That's why her portraits look so relaxed, because she just had that way of getting people to engage with her. They always had a smile. The smile was from talking to her."

Penrose is smiling now. Though his relationship with his mother was complex – Miller was an alcoholic and suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder after the war – he loves to talk about her at work.

Penrose remembers Miller handing him one of her old cameras, a "beautiful Zeiss Contax" she had used during the war, and saying: "If you drop it, I'll break your neck." "Sometimes, once in a while, if we'd been together and taken pictures, she would discuss the pictures she had taken and the one that I'd taken," Penrose reminisces. "Pretty basic stuff, but I loved it. I wish we'd done a lot more of that." →

Above: *Floating Head* (Mary Taylor), New York studio, 1933. **Below**: Kate Winslet at Farleys with Antony Penrose, Miller's son and biographer, with whom she collaborated on the film *Lee*. Picasso's painting of William the bull at right.

By the time Penrose was born in 1947 to Miller and her husband, the painter Roland Penrose, Miller had already largely put away her cameras. As a child, Penrose knew his mother had been a photographer during the war, but "she was very self-deprecating", he stresses. "She didn't want to discuss it. If *you* showed up wanting to interview her," Penrose adds, nodding at me, "she would be very polite and very kind; you'd be clutching a huge glass of whisky by now. And she would say, 'I didn't do anything at all that was interesting, and anything I did do was destroyed in the war, there's nothing left now.'"

We have left the kitchen and are standing in the space that was once Miller's office, a room flooded with light at the back of the house, with two large glass doors that spill out into the garden. All around us is evidence of the photographer's phenomenal output: her cameras, her leather satchel, the baby Hermes typewriter on which she would craft her articles, her light meter and boxes of flashbulbs. The walls are lined with bookshelves featuring publications that have used Miller's images. And yet, until *Surrealist Lee Miller* opens this month at Melbourne's Heide Gallery, no institution in Australia has ever staged an exhibition of her work, despite the fact that she "created some of the most memorable photographic images of the 20th century", notes the gallery's head curator Kendrah Morgan. (Penrose guest-curated the exhibition himself.) *Lee*, the first biopic of Miller's life, starring Kate Winslet and written by former Australian *Vogue* editor Marion Hume, is also just reaching cinemas in the coming months. As Morgan puts it: "The impact of her legacy is only now being fully explored and her reputation is extending beyond the UK and Europe."

Miller's career began in 1927 at the age of 19 when, while crossing a New York street, she was saved from a car accident by the magazine publisher Condé Nast. He took one look at her – striking and charismatic – and put her on the cover of his publication, American *Vogue*, where she spent the next few years as a star model. But Miller was fascinated with the art of photography itself: her father was an amateur photographer and Miller had an engineer's brain, drawn to the mechanics of a camera and the ways light could be refracted and captured. She moved to Paris and got a job in the surrealist Man Ray's studio, where the pair developed the solarisation technique which reverses an image's tones; it would become their signature. She took Man Ray as a lover and befriended fellow artists including Pablo Picasso and Joan Miró while becoming a celebrated fashion photographer for *Vogue* in both Paris and London. And then, when Germany invaded Poland in 1939, she took on her most challenging assignment yet: reporting from the frontlines on the horrors of war.

When Miller died in 1977, Penrose made a discovery at his childhood home that astonished him: some 80,000 negatives, carefully boxed up and "tied four ways with string", jammed in the back of the attic. "Luckily, the attic was dry, and relatively cool," he notes, wryly. "It's what some curators call benign neglect." Still, he adds, "It's a miracle that any of them survived at all." But Miller's archival record was not only intact, it also comprised telegrams, letters, objects and ephemera, IDs and army uniforms, tripods and gear. Since that first discovery almost half a century ago, Penrose has painstakingly catalogued his mother's work. "She wanted us to see what had happened," Penrose muses now. "But then, at the end of the war, I think she recognised that she had to put it away. And I realise now that I think she understood the historical importance. Which is why she hid it so carefully."

From the outside, Farleys is a lovely English country house in a charming Sussex village called Chiddingly, about an hour and a half from London. There are clues as to what lies inside, though, and they begin with the surrealist statues studding the gardens surrounding the home. Enter through the garden door and you'll be presented with a watercolour painting of William the bull, dashed off by Picasso in the Farleys guestbook after one particular visit and that now hangs, framed, above the kitchen table. Behind the stove is a ceramic surrealist tile – elongated corn-yellow nose, two mismatched swirls for eyes – also by the hand of the Spanish surrealist. (How many English country homes have a splashback by Picasso?)

After the war, the kitchen was Miller's sanctuary. She was a passionate chef who owned more than 2,000 cookbooks; the bespoke fitted kitchen at Farleys was the talk of the village when it was installed, Penrose remembers, with its washed blue formica countertops and angled drawers. (Even the kitchen →

Above: Miller's searing report in US *Vogue*, June 1945, documenting the liberation of Buchenwald and the end of the war. **Below**: Miller in a photograph taken by her friend David E. Scherman in the London *Vogue* studio, 1943.

ANNIE LEIBOVITZ. © LEE MILLER ARCHIVES ENGLAND 2023. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. WWW.LEEMILLER.CO.UK, DAVID E. SCHERMAN

Above left: Pablo Picasso and Lee Miller in his studio in Paris, 1944. **Right**: Picasso painted several portraits of Miller, including this one from 1937.

cabinets at Miller's home are surrealist). Penrose's father painted a bright yellow cornucopia mural over the fireplace in the dining room where the couple's friends, including Picasso and Miró, would frequently gather. "My parents chose Chiddingly because of its proximity to Newhaven, where the ferry from Dieppe would dock," Penrose says. "If anyone weird or foreign came off the ferry, the taxi drivers brought them straight here." After the war, Miller loved to entertain at Farleys; a cherished dish was two roasted cauliflower "breasts" with cherry tomatoes for nipples. "Remember, Lee had been at the liberation of concentration camps," Penrose explains. "She had seen people who had been systematically starved to death. She wanted to feed people."

Miller was already on *Vogue*'s roster of staff photographers when World War II broke out. At first, Miller photographed what Julie Summers describes in her biography of British *Vogue* editor Audrey Withers as London's "theatre of war": the city carrying on in the face of blackouts and the Blitz. In 1942, however, Miller petitioned Withers to be sent as a correspondent into Europe. She was granted her accreditation on December 30 and promptly visited Savile Row for her uniform. Miller's first assignment for British *Vogue* was to photograph American hospitals for wounded soldiers in Normandy, for which she filed a screed of text and almost 90 images. Next, Miller was dispatched to St Malo, where a twist of intelligence fate meant that she was the only reporter stationed with the American Infantry during the brutal 1944 siege. British *Vogue* published six pages of Miller's reporting, under attack, in its October 1944 edition. It was this manuscript, running 10,000 words long, that Penrose first pulled out of the attic in 1977. "Machine gunfire, belched from the end pillbox," Penrose recites, eyes closed, from memory. "It just leapt off the page … It was the start of a huge voyage of discovery, which allowed me to discover Lee as the photographer that she was, but more importantly for me to discover her as the mother she was, and the person behind that."

Some of Miller's images from St Malo, alongside others taken in Normandy, Paris, Vienna and Germany, are featured in Heide Gallery's exhibition *Surrealist Lee Miller*. "Miller's British *Vogue* images are remarkable on a number of levels," curator Morgan reflects, firstly because of the "graphic nature and psychological intensity of the subject matter". "Her ability to capture the darkness and light of the human condition and her great empathy, as well as her surrealist eye, come through powerfully," adds Morgan. Miller was one of the few female correspondents during the war; in the case of St Malo, she was the *only* photojournalist present. "It does represent a great achievement of Lee's," her editor Withers wrote in a memo to American *Vogue*. "I think, too, it confers prestige on us to be represented by the only woman photographer under fire in this campaign." In 1945, Miller travelled to Germany, where she bore terrible witness to the liberation of concentration camps at Buchenwald and Dachau. "I IMPLORE YOU TO BELIEVE THAT THIS IS TRUE," a telegram from Miller to Withers read, alongside horrifying images of war atrocities. American *Vogue* ran four pages of Miller's photographs under the headline: 'Believe it'.

The war never left Miller. "There were times when she would be really badly affected by alcohol abuse," shares Penrose. "She was just bloody miserable and unreasonable to everybody. But she also had the ability to incur a great deal of love in people. And I think that's why everybody forgave her." He views her recovery from alcoholism to be his mother's greatest achievement. "She clawed her way out of it," he says, plainly. "I can't think of anything more difficult than that. All the stuff she'd done, all the brave things and the crazy things, that is the one that I admire the most."

Miller's war photography is confronting, indelible and hauntingly composed. As Miller's friend and fellow correspondent David E. Scherman once described it, she shot "in an ice-cold rage". Two such captures feature in *Surrealist Lee Miller*: an eerie image of an SS guard floating in the river outside Dachau, or, indeed, Miller's most famous photograph, in which

Above left: *Charlie Chaplin with light fixture*, St. Moritz, Switzerland, 1932, by Miller. **Right**: *Fire Masks*, London, 1941, by Miller.

she is taking a bath in Hitler's apartment after the liberation of Dachau, her muddied boots ground into the plush carpet. As a surrealist, Miller's photography is defined by contrast and juxtaposition, as well as what Heide curator Morgan describes as her "dramatic use of shadow, her exploitation of chance elements, her dark humour". "Miller was as unconventional in her life as she was in her work, and as a woman and an artist who was unafraid to break the rules and forget her own path, she is an inspiring figure," notes Morgan. Briefly placed under house arrest after the siege of St Malo – her images were heavily censored by the military for capturing what is now understood to be early instances of the use of napalm – Miller nevertheless found her way back to the frontlines. "Throughout her career, she remained true to her own vision, strong in the face of adversity, an advocate for women, fiercely independent and a free spirit," says Morgan. A few times a year, Penrose will meet a young female photographer who tells him that they picked up a camera because of Miller. "Now, that is something she would be proud of," he reflects.

"She wanted us to see what had happened. But then, at the end of the war, I think she recognised that she had to put it away"

Today, with Heide's expansive exhibition, which comprises not only Miller's war imagery but photographs taken during her time living in Paris, Egypt and at Farleys, alongside Winslet's *Lee* and Penrose's ongoing efforts to preserve his mother's archive, Miller's legacy is secure. But Penrose remembers travelling to New York in the 80s to pitch art historians on his mother's work. "There was this guy who was a very, very well known, highly renowned curator of photography," Penrose recalls, "and I walked into his office and sat down and he said, 'Lee Miller is only a footnote to Man Ray. We are not interested in doing a show of hers at all.'" For decades, this mentality was Penrose's constant hurdle. "One of the biggest things that we had to push back against was, 'Oh, she was just a beautiful woman who shagged her way to the top,'" Penrose sums up. He takes a sip of his tea. "You know, that view tells me more about the person who's holding it than it does about anything else. The quality of her work speaks for itself."

And it does: a shadowy silhouette of the great pyramid of Giza, an abandoned carousel in Paris suspended in time and space, the endlessly sensuous curve of a woman's nude back. The quality *and* the quantity of it. Late in the afternoon, Penrose takes me into the archive's substantial cold storage. The heavy door opens with a whisper onto decades of artistic and social history. Here are all of Miller's original negatives, hundreds and hundreds of thousands of them. Penrose holds one of the half plates, about the size of a paperback novel, to the light, revealing an arresting self-portrait. "There she is," he says. Here are Miller's first prints, the ones she would have developed in a darkroom herself, transferring paper from solution to solution, watching as her images slowly bled into view. In the antechamber to the cold storage, an archivist is packaging up photographs and sending them off to galleries around the world. A suite of original prints are making the journey to Gagosian New York; some 100 works from all corners of Miller's oeuvre are coming all the way to Melbourne.

"I really enjoy it when curators get into [the archive] and they just think, right, this is a whole avenue to research. None of us had thought of doing that, but it's added a whole new dimension," Penrose reflects in the afternoon sunshine. "You know, we ain't through yet. There's so much more in that material that we can find. And keep finding."

Surrealist Lee Miller *opens at Heide Gallery on November 4.* Lee *is coming to cinemas soon.*

LEE MILLER © LEE MILLER ARCHIVES ENGLAND 2023.
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DRIES VAN NOTEN coat, $3,875. PRADA dress, P.O.A. KHAITE shoes, P.O.A. All prices approximate; details at Vogue.com.au/WTB.

Soft launch

This season, fall into the graceful ease of silks, sumptuous textures and sheer fabrics – from delicate slips to knits that cocoon.

Styled by Alex Harrington. Photographed by Larissa Hofmann.

Opposite page: JW ANDERSON top, P.O.A. BOTTEGA VENETA shorts, $1,670. **This page:** GIORGIO ARMANI dress, $3,400.

LARISSA HOFMANN

Opposite page: MARYAM NASSIR ZADEH top, P.O.A. N°21 dress, $1,180. **This page:** GIOVANNA FLORES top, $900. KHAITE shoes, P.O.A.

LARISSA HOFMANN

THE ROW top, $6,650.
LOUIS VUITTON scarf,
P.O.A. Briefs, model's own.

LARISSA HOFMANN

LARISSA HOFMANN

Opposite page: JASON WU COLLECTION dress, P.O.A. **This page:** DURAN LANTINK coat, P.O.A.

Hair: Blake Henderson
Make-up: Fara Homidi
Manicure: Saffron Goddard
Model: Lila Moss

COURTESY LOUIS VUITTON

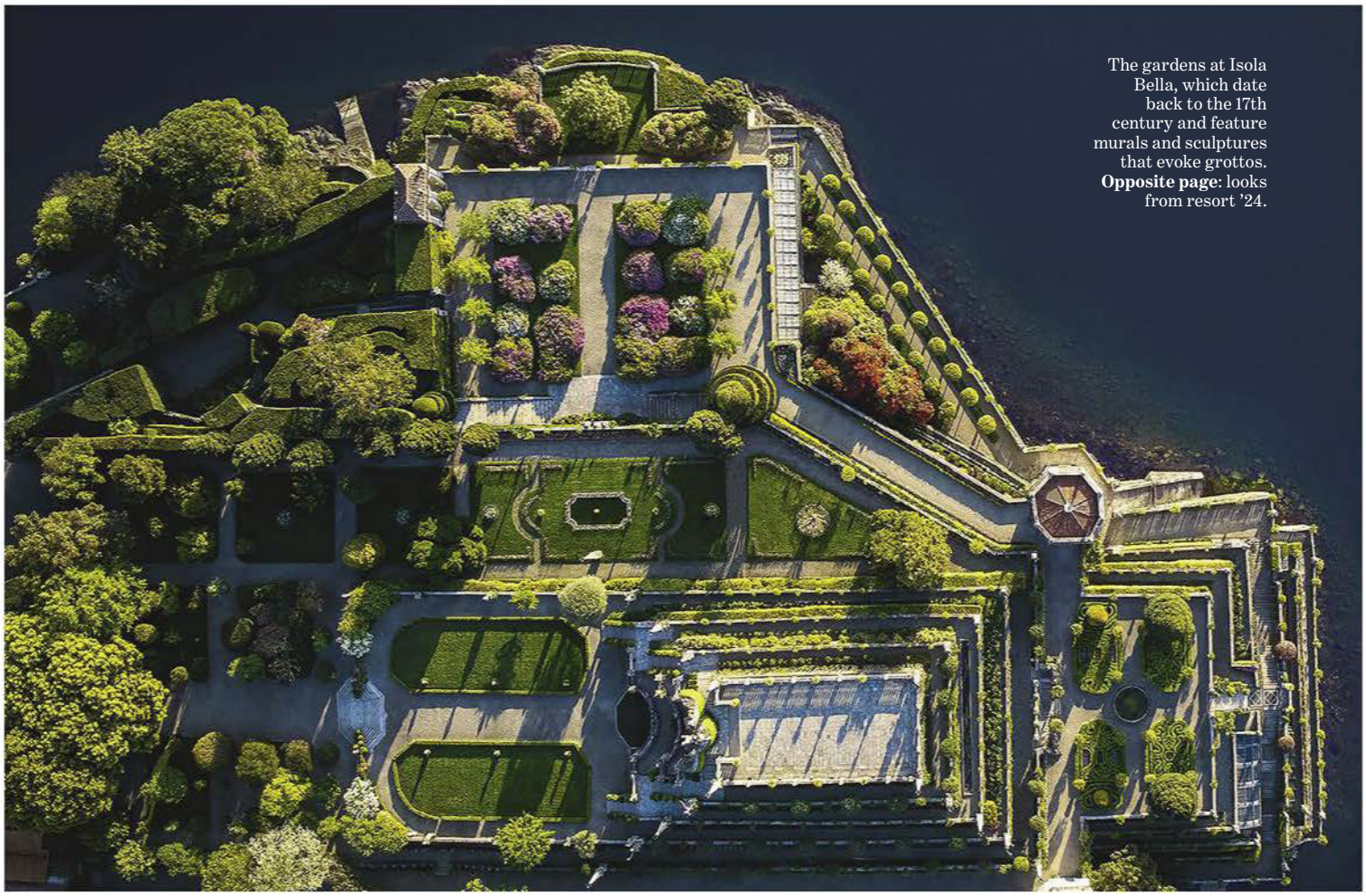
Out of the blue

Louis Vuitton decamped to one of Italy's most mystical islands to present its resort '24 range, an exercise in fantasy that looked to the water for rebirth. By Jonah Waterhouse.

The mysteries of the underwater world have long been contemplated by humans. Under the lapping waves of lakes and oceans is a sphere of the planet that's beautiful, perilous and has birthed thousands of years of folklore – from mermaids to the bewitching voices of sirens from Greek mythology, and other mythical creatures that haunt subaquatic depths evading discovery.

Nicolas Ghesquière, womenswear creative director at Louis Vuitton, has always contemplated ideas larger than human life. The sci-fi fanatic's otherworldly fascinations have punctuated his time at the brand; think of his spring/summer '16 collection, a cyberpunk fantasy that borrowed from famous video games to speak to the integration of digital in our everyday. The clothes in his recent resort collections emanate power; last year's show, where models stalked San Diego's brutalist Salk Institute like →

Louis Vuitton's resort '24 show held at Isola Bella, (pictured opposite page), one of the Borromean Islands of Lago Maggiore in north Italy.



The gardens at Isola Bella, which date back to the 17th century and feature murals and sculptures that evoke grottos. **Opposite page**: looks from resort '24.

futuristic goddesses, was considered by many a high point since he started at the label in 2014. And so, when the designer decamped to the 500-year-old gardens of northern Italy's Isola Bella (or "beautiful island") for his resort '24 presentation – a stark contrast to the modernist locations he's chosen for past resort shows, like New York's TWA terminal or a John Lautner-designed home in Palm Springs – it was clear he was looking to a different kind of otherworldliness.

From the outset, a theme of metamorphosis emerged. Opening looks featured jackets made from scuba material with frill necks and fins, the models resembling human divers mutating to become one with their undersea surroundings. The idea of change was pinpointed by the house, which noted that resort '24 represents "a narrative of transformation … a to-and-fro between the familiar and the singular, the ordinary towards the extraordinary". In a pre-show interview, Ghesquière spoke of imagining the models as mermaids emerging from the ocean during their transition into human form.

> Ghesquière spoke of imagining the models as mermaids emerging from the ocean during their transition into human form

In this sense, the leather accessories – an integral piece of Louis Vuitton's DNA, with the brand starting as a luggage manufacturer in 1854 – borrowed from submarine beauty. One bucket handbag was covered in glassy shells, while the folded Side Trunk, introduced last year, was coloured in orange, blue and soft pink tones, like precious coral reefs. Ghesquière's innovative accessories, like the Twist handbag with its interlocked LV clasp, were reimagined in an egg-blue hue, light and calming like the water of the tropics. The designer's tailoring was reinvented with mystical underwater trappings, like neoprene blazers and languid canvas trench coats with mother-of-pearl buttons, and even an angular blouse with anchor-shaped clasps to fasten, paired with a sequinned skirt that resembled a scaly tail. A high point came in the ruched-front dresses with asymmetrical pleating that flowed down the body like cascading water. Beautiful as they were, the corresponding leather buckle-up boots and bike shorts underneath gave an air of utility, for Ghesquière's beauty isn't made to stand still. The vision further materialised with headpieces of squamous metal giving something of an air of underwater royalty – fit for Amphitrite.

Ghesquière's interest in underwater mysticism may seem abstract, but the aquatic world holds as many secrets as space. More than 80 per cent of the ocean has never been mapped by humans, a statistic that proves technology can only reach so far. The idea that all life on Earth originated in lakes and oceans makes the submerged portion of our planet our new frontier. The spirit of travel has long been Vuitton's modus operandi, and through charting the undersea world, Ghesquière has found a new way to build on the house's intrepid origin story.

Most of the sirens had transformed to humans by the time they made it to land, but the most potent dose of mysticism was saved for the final looks. Five gowns closed the show featuring skirts that flowed outwards like tails, with material and hues evoking the unique textures of the ocean: the sleeves of one green gown bore a resemblance to underwater kelp, while the appliqués on the bust of another took after seashells. Weaving through the historic grounds of Isola Bella, they symbolised new life, and the beauty in emerging, renewed. ■

COURTESY LOUIS VUITTON

STYLING: LINDA GÜMÜS GERRITSEN MODEL: OLIVIA VINTEN
ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

HERMÈS dress, $21,085. Jimmy Choo bag, $3,075. **Right**: DIESEL top, P.O.A.

Coming in hot

Like our wardrobes, skincare and lazy weekend rituals, hair routines should evolve as summer draws near. Expert Sophie Roberts offers her tips for looking after your locks under the Australian sun. By Mahalia Chang.

HAIR & MAKE-UP MAGDALENA LOZA **PHOTOGRAPHS** JORIN KOERS

The days are hot and sticky, beach trips stretch long and salt crusted. And yet, the zenith of the famously searing Australian summer blesses our hair with a new lease on life. It emerges from ocean dips boasting often-sought "mermaid waves", or natural highlights from increased sun exposure, while easy hairstyles that protect strands from relentless rays – think top knots and braids – open up myriad new looks.

But with those benefits come challenges. The harsh sun can damage hair, making it dry, brittle and weak. Environmental conditions, like wind, seawater and humidity, plus lifestyle factors – think increased alcohol consumption over the holiday period – can mess with our natural texture and scalp health. In preparation for what is predicted to be the very hot summer to come, hairstylist Sophie Roberts – owner and founder of her namesake salon in Potts Point, Sydney – offers a hot-weather game plan. →

Prep in your step

It goes without saying that good hair care starts with protection, even before you step outside your door.

"Sun exposure has a bleaching effect that weakens the hair's protein structure, dehydrating it and reducing the elasticity of our hair," explains Roberts. "Heat and humidity can result in an oily or sweaty scalp and frizzy hair. Chlorine and salt can dehydrate your hair, particularly if you're a blonde or have bleached hair.

"Using physical protectants, such as an SPF conditioning mask, before and during sun exposure, and choosing spray sunscreens designed for hair, can provide protection from harmful UV rays that often dehydrate your hair and cause colour to fade."

Like regular sunscreens, which are applied prior to heading out, spritz a mist SPF to damp or dry hair before you leave and reapply as needed, especially after swimming. An SPF for your hair creates a barrier between the hair and UV rays, and can also add nourishment and hydration to the scalp and follicles.

"Alternatively, you can always wear a hat or swimming cap!" adds Roberts.

Cut to the chase

While most of us think of a summer haircut as an aesthetic choice, or at least one that might leave us cooler, a trim might also be the key to happier hair in the heat.

"Start the season with a fresh haircut," offers Roberts. "Mitigate damage to your healthy hair by trimming broken and tired ends. Embrace layers or light texture on the ends, or a style that works well with air-drying or light heat styling. If you have bangs that require blow-drying, consider blending them into a layer to avoid constant heat styling.

"I would also recommend switching bleach for tint foils or balayage, and glosses between colouring to maintain colour, tame frizz and add shine."

Roberts's suggestion rings true: the less product and heat via tools or dryers we use, the healthier our hair will be in summer when overuse of these options compounds sun exposure issues. Other considerations might be how you can keep strands off your face and neck on very hot days, and how much constant upkeep some styles may require.

Go your own way

When we think about skincare, it's often all about customisation. Our skin type, environment, diet and lifestyle all influence the products we choose. The same should be true for what's on our head. Everything from our hair type and texture to whether or not we bleach or colour, and the health of our scalp, will determine not only how your hair reacts to sun exposure, but the measures that need to be taken to protect it.

"Straight, curly or coily hair have differing considerations when it comes to treatment and styling products," says Roberts. "While summer environmental conditions affect all hair similarly, coily hair can be brittle, naturally more dehydrated and has a tendency to frizz, so it can handle heavier, more oil-based treatments.

"Curly hair, also naturally drier, needs a lighter-weight product to smooth and moisturise. Straight hair can suffer from humidity and oiliness and needs hydration without weighing it down at all."

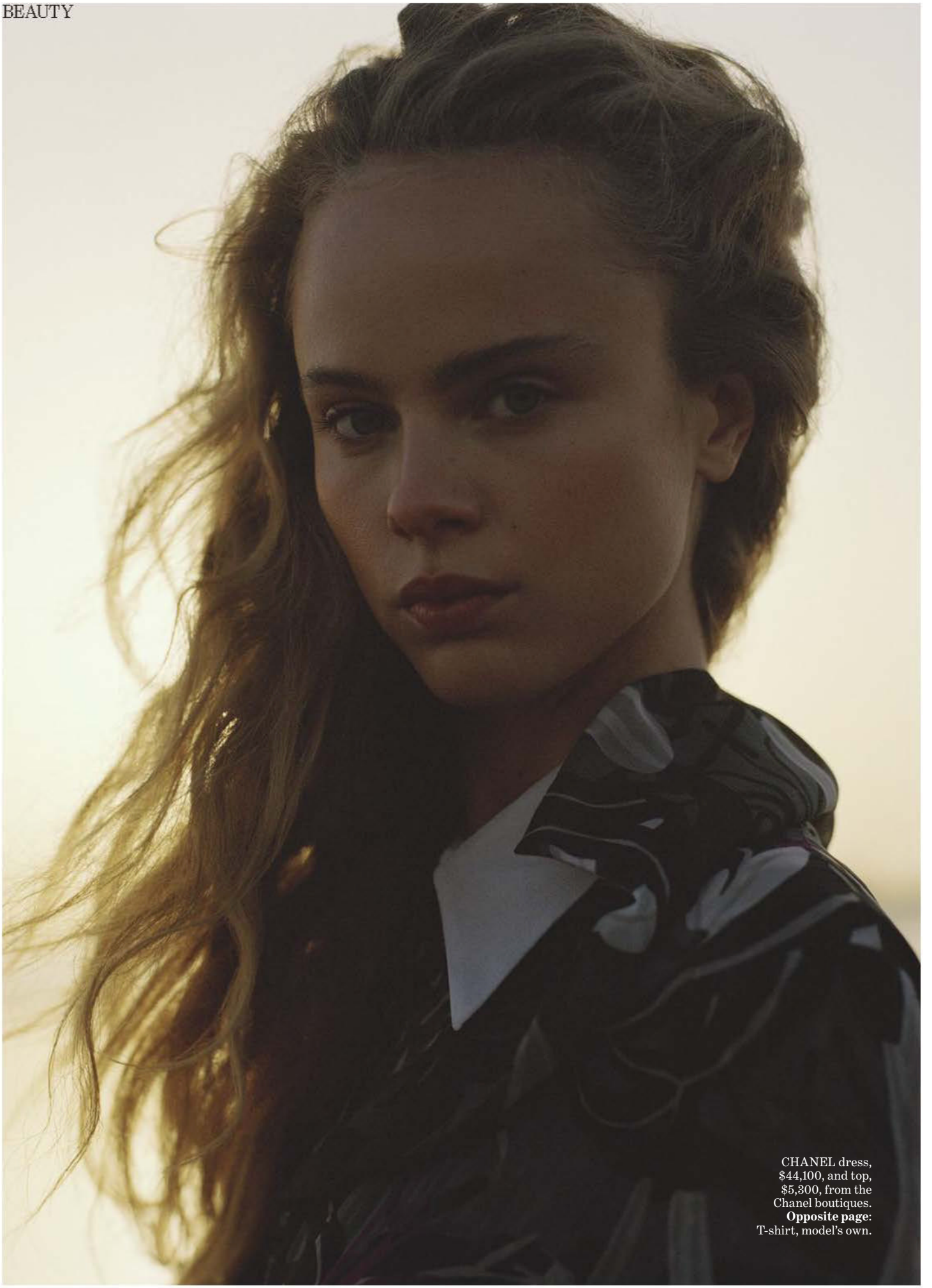
If in doubt, a visit to your hairdresser will shed light on the products you should be using for your hair to survive and thrive this summer. →

"Neglecting to wash out the salt, chlorine or impurities from your hair after swimming can leave your hair looking dull"

From left: ULTRA VIOLETTE Preen Screen SPF50 Reapplication Mist Skinscreen, $42*; ORIBE Hair Alchemy Resilience Shampoo, $80; PHILIP B. Detangling Comb, $67; AVEDA Sun Care Hair and Body Cleanser, $44, from Harvey Norman.
*Always read the label and follow directions for use. Prolonged sun exposure should be avoided.

JORIN KOERS
ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

DIESEL top, P.O.A.



CHANEL dress, $44,100, and top, $5,300, from the Chanel boutiques. **Opposite page**: T-shirt, model's own.

Take care

But, of course, a routine that also takes care of your hair after sun exposure will prove the most effective.

"Hydrating and moisture treatments after prolonged sun exposure are paramount," says Roberts. "Neglecting to wash out the salt, chlorine or impurities from your hair after swimming can leave your hair looking dull. Use a sulphate-free shampoo as often as you swim; they are gentler on colour and won't strip your hair of moisture. Your scalp, like the rest of your skin, is prone to clogging with increased sweating, so introduce a scalp scrub to exfoliate and detoxify.

"Invest in a wide-tooth or saw-cut comb [rounded edges to prevent pulling out hair at the follicle or causing damage to ends] and a microfibre towel to squeeze out water. This will assist in styling and reduces drying time."

On top of daily care, a weekly hair mask and some timeout from styling can give your mane some extra hydration and a much-needed break.

The holy trinity

Golden rules for maintaining healthy summer hair

1. START THE SEASON WITH A FRESH CUT. A great haircut designed to work with and enhance your natural texture for styling ease, and to limit heat damage from too much styling.
2. PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE. Use an SPF and conditioning mask before and during sun exposure.
3. INVEST IN REGULAR TREATMENTS. Alternate between moisture and protein masks to hydrate and fortify your hair.

From top: SACHAJUAN Scalp Scrub, $76; COLOUR WOW Dream Coat Supernatural Spray, $64; SISLEY Rituel Precious Hair Care Oil, $135; CHRISTOPHE ROBIN Regenerating Mask with Prickly Pear Oil, $85.

JORIN KOERS
ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

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On the tools

Without the right utensils, even the best of beauty products fall flat. From your hair to your skin, perfect your application with chic and effective accessories.

ART DIRECTION ARQUETTE COOKE **PHOTOGRAPH** LAUREN BAMFORD

Clockwise from top left: MR SMITH Non-Marking Clips, 10 for $30; BY TERRY Tool Expert Face and Body Brush, $64, from Mecca; RAE MORRIS Jishaku #18: Lash Brow Duo brush, $45; MR SMITH comb, $33; HERMÈS Les Pinceaux Hermès travel make-up brush, $100; RAE MORRIS Jishaku #25: Deluxe Radiance brush, $200; HOURGLASS Lash Curler, $51, from Mecca; BY THE BE. Clear Quartz Gua Sha, $60.

WORDS: MAHALIA CHANG
ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

Sensitivity training

Gentle skincare is the regimen du jour. Does that mean less is more? Or a cabinet of creams and serums galore? Lauren Mechling investigates.

PHOTOGRAPH STEFAN RUIZ

Paloma Elsesser.

It is a woman's duty to use all the means in her power to beautify and preserve her complexion," wrote the Irish dancer Lola Montez in her delightful 1858 guidebook, *The Arts of Beauty*. How closely, but misguidedly, have I followed this advice! From the time I've been able to roam the pharmacy unsupervised, I have been engaged in a battle for beauty. In my youthful zeal for perfect skin, I leaned upon scrubs and heavy-duty toners, most of which chafed and stung – to my great satisfaction. When acne came for me at university, I armed myself with prescription-grade gels and capsules that blitzed my spots and made my skin flake. A fair price to pay, I reasoned. Recent decades featured laser treatments and powerhouse potions that I one-click purchased as I brewed my morning coffee.

But amid the ambient noise about skin sensitivity, I began to wonder: might it be time to start easing up? Not long ago,

an obsession with so-called clean beauty had us all fretting about how our potions might be polluting our insides. Now skin sensitivity – the new gluten intolerance! – has us setting our sights on the surface. A new crop of ultra-gentle, if not ultra-simple, products caters to those prone to itching, stinging and inflammation – or who, like me, just want something soothing after a lifetime of chasing the burn.

Skin sensitivity isn't an official medical diagnosis, though anywhere from 60 to 70 per cent of women say that they suffer from it, and women are stepping forward in droves to claim the delicate mantle of the moment. Lila Moss's sensitive skin played into make-up artist Fara Homidi's inspiration for the model's walk down the runway in barely there make-up for Chloé's autumn/winter '23/'24 show. Zendaya, Sofia Richie and *Euphoria* star Sydney Sweeney are all sensitive-identifying, while Marisa Tomei one-upped the lot when she told *Vogue* she has a "sensitive system". We are all, it appears, snowflakes, each special in our own way.

Our skin can become sensitive in response to an array of triggers – cosmetic ingredients, pollution, extreme UVs, or TikTok-inspired DIY bathroom-sink chemical peels. The damage is to the skin barrier; when defenseless, our outermost layer stands no chance against irritants. "Imagine a sheet with a high thread count versus a lower thread count, or a canvas bag versus a plastic bag," says New York plastic surgeon Lara Devgan, giving me a crash course on the states of skin barriers and the myriad ways we can wreak havoc on them.

Welsh-born aesthetician Sofie Pavitt, a former designer for Tory Burch, once took regular trips to Korea and learned everything she could about 10-step cleansing routines. It was all so elaborate and thrilling! But now, Pavitt says, "I take a more minimalist approach," borne out in her newly launched skincare line – a super-tight edit of a mere three products. Pavitt's Manhattan atelier resembles a therapy office.

"I specialise in problematic skin," she advises. "I talk to my clients about their diet and lifestyle, and we'll work on a home routine." I start using her products – a gel face wash that takes its time to form suds, and a light exfoliant serum – and they have a gateway effect.

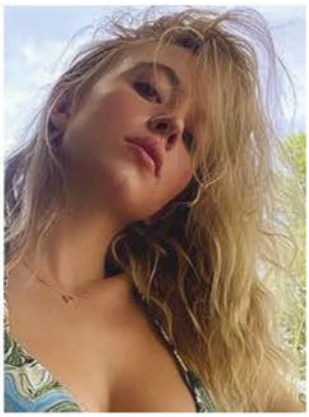
Over the coming days, I set off on a tender bender. Ren Clean Skincare's Evercalm Overnight Recovery Balm melts on my fingers. I dig into the tinted balms that anchor Bobbi Brown's "clean no-make-up" line Jones Road. I slather on French pharmacist Natacha Bonjout's Le Balm, a solution that smells faintly of roses and comes in an ivory tin that looks like a chubby macaron. Every time I apply a dollop of Biography's Long June, a silky chamomile- and camellia-seed-packed oil formulation, my face feels as though it's sipping a mug of herbal tea. I put in a preorder for Lesse's moisturiser, whose key ingredient is powerhouse Australian native Kakadu plum extract, known to be a potent yet gentle source of vitamin C.

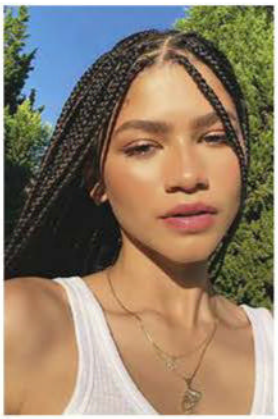
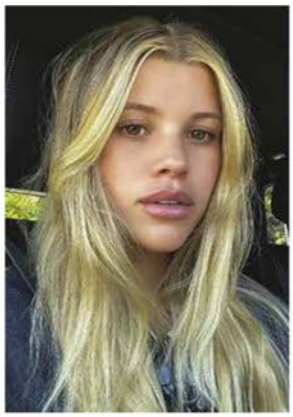
> A new crop of ultra-gentle, if not ultra-simple, products caters to those prone to itching, stinging and inflammation

It all feels divine, and smugly salubrious – but am I going overboard? New York-based dermatologist Shereene Idriss tells me that not everyone needs so radical a refresh. "I just feel like it's overkill to limit yourself from products that might bring you better results overall," she warns.

A dose of wisdom comes from celebrity make-up artist Gucci Westman, who recently posted a picture of herself that revealed thumbprint-sized red splotches. "I think it started from using overly aggressive active products," the 54-year-old tells me. Her cult line, Westman Atelier, is geared for the needs of people with skin sensitivities; its latest Skin Activator serum has 12 ingredients said to strengthen the moisture barrier. I confide that after a lifetime of product promiscuity, it's doubtful I could ever land on a one-serum solution. The profusion of gentle giants on my bathroom counter has been way too tempting, and I've been pouncing on every vial and tube in sight.

"It's okay to be curious," Westman tells me, saying she too can weaken in the face of possibility. "There is a chance that I might launch something else."



Celebrities who have revealed they have sensitive skin. **From left**: Sydney Sweeney, Marisa Tomei, Zendaya and Sofia Richie.

STYLING: MAX ORTEGA. HAIR: SONDREA "DRE" DEMPY-SANDERS. MAKE-UP: YUMI LEE
INSTAGRAM: @SOFIARICHIE, @SYDNEY_SWEENEY, @MARISATOMEI, @ZENDAYA

A decade in the sun

Ten years ago, make-up artist Charlotte Tilbury launched her namesake brand into the world to critical acclaim. A decade later, she reflects on an empire in the sun. By Mahalia Chang.

PHOTOGRAPH LAUREN BAMFORD

CHARLOTTE TILBURY Beautiful Skin foundation in 4 Neutral and 11 Neutral, $70 each, and Matte Revolution lipstick in The Queen, $54.

VOGUE AUSTRALIA: **Tell us why you created the brand Charlotte Tilbury.**
CHARLOTTE TILBURY: "I wanted to share my beauty secrets with the world, decodify my make-up magic, and empower everyone, everywhere to feel and look like the most beautiful and confident version of themselves. Make-up and skincare is such an empowering confidence-boosting tool – and why I love it so much – because when you feel confident, it truly unlocks your potential."
VA: **How do you reflect on the Charlotte who created the brand a decade ago?**
CT: "That she continues to dare to dream it, dare to believe it and dare to do it. She still innovates hero products and creates global trends and always with purpose in mind. I started working with Women for Women International not long after I started my brand and I'm so proud to say 10 years later, we also support incredible organisations like the Prince's Trust, the Clooney Foundation for Justice and The Rocket Fund, powered by the Elton John AIDS foundation, to give back, make the world a better place in the virtuous circle of life."
VA: **What was your first "pinch me" moment after creating the Charlotte Tilbury brand?**
CT: "There have been so many magical moments. I am so proud of everything we've achieved, from record-breaking launches to winning more than 500 awards and counting, to being transformed into my very own Disney animation. But I'll never forget receiving my MBE from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II [in 2018] for services to the beauty and cosmetics industry. It was a dream come true."
VA: **Does one product stand out as the breakthrough for Charlotte Tilbury?**
CT: "That's like asking me to choose a favourite child. But if I had to choose just one product for everyone, it would have to be my award-winning, best-selling Magic Cream. I call it the magic dew of youth and luminosity in a jar. Your make-up will always look better. Magic Cream is magic skin."
VA: **Who, to you, is the Charlotte Tilbury wearer?**
CT: "Everyone, everywhere."
VA: **In three words, what's next for Charlotte Tilbury?**
CT: "Darlings, watch this space."

Holiday spirit

We're creeping ever so close to the silly season, which can only mean one thing: a new wave of twinkling, shining, gleaming festive make-up collections, perfect for any and all yuletide bashes.

From left: GUCCI Limited Edition Poudre De Beauté Éclat Soleil Powder, $120; CHANEL Le Vernis nail polish in Tuxedo, $43; BY TERRY Opulent Star V.I.P. Expert Palette N°6, $89.

PHOTOGRAPHS: MATIAS ARAVENA, GORUNWAY.COM
ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE. DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

Gold rush

For the time poor, a serum that works twofold easily earns its place in a routine. Drunk Elephant's B-Goldi drops not only restore radiance and evenness to the skin by fading dark spots and hyperpigmentation with a hit of five per cent niacinamide, but also deliver luminosity to the skin with reflective gold pigments. Add a little to your serum, moisturiser or sunscreen for a subtle brightening effect.

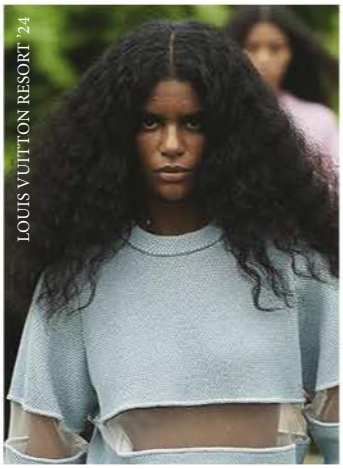
DRUNK ELEPHANT
B-Goldi Bright Drops, $61.

Backstage insider

THE LOOK: Big, bold hair

THE LOWDOWN: After seasons of slicked-back buns and smooth tresses dominating trends and social media feeds, the runways of Paris and Milan turned to volume and dimension. From Chanel's 90s blow-out, to emphasised texture at Louis Vuitton, resort '24 put out the call to favour size and make a statement in summer, no matter what your hair type.

CHANEL RESORT '24



LOUIS VUITTON RESORT '24

ANNA SUI RESORT '24

Leading the way

Reaffirming its belief that "the world needs science and science needs women", the L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Regional Talent Program this year again recognises four brilliant women in STEM. The 2023 Australian fellowship winners, named this month, will receive a $25,000 grant to further their research or fund childcare so they can return to the workforce. Nominees span fields such as data exploration, autoimmune diseases and cancer research.

Breathe easy

From improved mood to a more balanced mind and body, breathing techniques are being heralded as a game-changer in the wellness space. Breathwork specialist Rory Warnock (right, in image left) breaks down his top tips for better breathing.

USE YOUR NOSE. "The nose is functional, the mouth is dysfunctional. The nose will help filter humidified air to bring clean oxygen into our lungs."

GO SLOW. "If you breathe too fast, you add stress to the nervous system, the brain and body. By consciously slowing the breath down, we can move into more balanced states and help with homeostasis."

BREATHE DEEP. "We have the highest concentration of alveoli [air sacs] deep in our lungs; this is where gas exchange takes place. Deep breathing is optimal breathing, and also helps improve lung volume and diaphragm function."

DO YOUR HOMEWORK. "Build a toolbox of breathwork tools and techniques you can refer to in moments of stress, to help feel more calm."

PRACTICE WHILE YOU SLEEP. "Use your nose to breathe when you sleep. Nasal breathing is so important to our mental and physical health and overall wellbeing." While it may sound extreme, Warnock says you can even tape your mouth to ensure that you nasal breathe when you sleep.

Scents & sensibility

Following a highly publicised sale to L'Oréal, Aesop is the latest Australian luxury brand set for its next chapter of global expansion. *Vogue* goes in search of the secret formula to success at its new head office and lab in Melbourne. By Jessica Montague.

STYLING HARRIET CRAWFORD
PHOTOGRAPH JOSHUA BENTLEY

Aesop general manager Preet Bains wears an ALBUS LUMEN jacket, $1,290. P. JOHNSON jacket, worn as top, $425. Her own jewellery.

Stepping into Aesop's freshly minted lab in Melbourne's Collingwood is akin to a Willy Wonka wonderland. But instead of chocolates concocted by a mad connoisseur, it's all lotions and potions using the latest science techniques. Beakers filled with brightly handled spatulas and silver stirrers sit benchside alongside thermometers, electric scales and brown bottles with differing levels of elixirs. Several young women wearing white lab coats huddle in a corner, while another stares down at her would-be gel moisturiser as an expensive-looking mixer whirls to life. "I'm cooling it down," she says seriously. "It's still too warm."

Don't let the child's play of this scene fool you. These young scientists are among the best pharmaceutical graduates in the country and the formulas they're perfecting could eventually be poured into those iconic amber jars sold across 297 signature stores in 27 countries.

Aesop is arguably Australia's biggest beauty success story, having first sold a 65 per cent stake to Brazil's Natura in 2013 (the company formally acquired it in 2016) and now, a second sale to L'Oréal Group that values the brand at US$2.52 billion). The acquisition, finalised at the end of August, is the largest ever for the French beauty giant and marks an exciting new chapter for the Melbourne brand founded by hairdresser Dennis Paphitis in 1987.

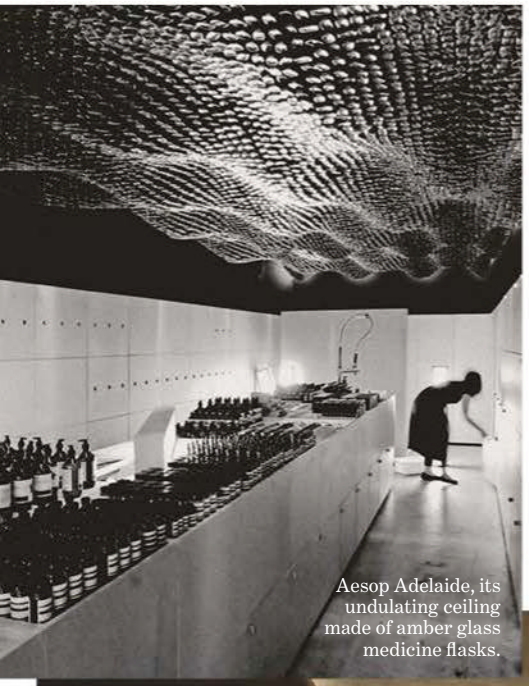
While Paphitis is no longer involved in the business, there is a trio at the helm with a combined 66 years experience at Aesop. Chief customer officer Suzanne Santos has been on board since inception (almost 37 years), chief executive officer Michael O'Keefe joined in 2003, and general manager Preet Bains is the relative newcomer with just under a decade with the company.

"For us, it's a pretty exciting chapter having the growth of the business recognised," shares Bains in a rare interview following the sale. "We're an Australian brand and our heritage is here. To have that recognised globally is pretty special. It's not the first time we've been bought, but it just comes back to what we've been able to build – a brand that has stood the test of time that's been created out of Australia."

Bains is unable to discuss official plans as part of L'Oréal's luxury division – the ink is barely dry with the French beauty conglomerate – but it's likely the newly opened head office, which adjoins the lab, will retain a key role. It replaces four other buildings along Smith Street ("A college campus," jokes Bains) and serves as the heart and home of Aesop, supporting some 300 people in regional and global functions.

"We have people who curate the playlists, think about the food, fragrance the space and create a full sensorial, elevated experience," says Bains of the open-plan space – all clean lines of concrete, wooden panelling and stainless steel softened by fresh greenery and floor-to-ceiling linen curtains. Front of house is merchandised to perfection according to the latest product launch, and a sink sits proudly at the entrance. "This is obviously the heart of our stores," says Bains of its prominence. "It's where we showcase the products, consultants can have a deeper conversation and you get the full sensorial experience that we try and bring."

Aesop is known for its meticulous attention to detail and this single-minded focus is not only central to its success but a trait Bains and co are fiercely proud. The brand often reformulates bestsellers with the latest science or ingredients rather than launching new products, and stores are architecturally created in context with their locale. The Rome store was famously



Aesop Adelaide, its undulating ceiling made of amber glass medicine flasks.

Left: Australian Blackbutt timber adds warmth. **Below**: The brand's elegant minimalist packaging.

Two travertine monoliths dominate at the centre of the new Collins Street location, which draws on qualities of civic architecture.

designed by *Call Me By Your Name* director Luca Guadagnino, while the new Collins Street space is inspired by the civic architecture of Melbourne with a domed ceiling to reflect the nearby state library.

"Everything you see – whether it's the position of the oil burners, how high the lights are turned up, the music, the positioning of the sink, the shelf heights – is thought-through design for a reason," confirms Bains. "It's not something we just pay lip service to … There's a very considered intention around how we develop products, where we draw inspiration from, how we formulate, how we design our spaces." (Bains says the original salon Paphitis owned in nearby Armadale "could've been an Aesop store today".)

Underneath that unwavering brand identity and iconic utilitarian aesthetic is an ethos anchored in respect, generosity, integrity, excellence, passion and creativity. "We make sure those values carry through everything that we do and have a very clear vision … It's consistent across the whole piece."

The approach has also always been broad and inclusive. "We draw inspiration from things like culture, arts, literature, design, architecture and all of that transcends borders, ethnicities and geographies. It can be for everyone and there's something that you can draw from it that resonates with you," continues Bains. "We've tried to create a brand that will appeal to everyone … that has become a deliberate part of the brand strategy."

Unlike other Australian global brands like Zimmermann, R.M. Williams and Penfolds, which trade on unique Australian-ness, Aesop relishes the fact it's also geographically agnostic. It's named after the famous Greek storyteller yet there's French on the packaging, which is very Japanese in its design.

"There have been plenty of people who have bottles like ours, but they can't replicate the whole thing because it's all these little things that add up to a collective which creates our success," Bains says.

It also comes from having the conviction, she admits, to say no to opportunities "even though they probably would've been commercially successful for us". Aesop famously does not engage celebrities or influencers and there's an adage Paphitis instilled for the brand: "whisper not shout". There have been just two collaborations in recent years: Rick Owens and Rimowa.

With expansion into China earmarked by L'Oréal Group CEO in a statement following the sale (Aesop currently only has five stores there), maintaining excellence is a priority for the local team. "There was a point in time when I visited every store, but you can't actually do that any more, so when you're onboarding these remote teams we've got to take the time to explain the 'why' behind what we do," says Bains. "We're going to have [L'Oréal's] expertise and support to help grow the brand even more and take it to the next level, but still all the while maintaining our brand essence and what keeps us special."

"As a brand we can't remain idle," Bains adds. "Some people are uncomfortable because change brings uncertainty, but change also brings opportunity, so we try to focus on where it could lead or what it could mean for us."

What excites her most is the extent of Aesop's global potential. "There's still so much to do and so much low-hanging fruit that our challenge is: what do we do next? How do we do everything? How do we actually identify what's going to be the next thing for us to do? That's almost our biggest challenge, but also the most exciting part," she smiles. "It's a good problem to have."

HAIR: RORY RICE. MAKE-UP: MOLLY WARKENTIN
OTHER IMAGES: COURTESY OF AESOP

CASETiFY
CASETiFY.COM
FREEDOM TO BOUNCE

Divine feminine

Actor and activist Yara Shahidi steps into the light as the face of Jean Paul Gaultier's new fragrance, Gaultier Divine. Here, she talks confidence and her approach to self-care.

Yara Shahidi.

VOGUE AUSTRALIA: **You're a very busy woman. How do you make time to prioritise self-care and what does that look like for you?**
YARA SHAHIDI: "That's a great question. I've been trying to figure out what routines I can maintain at my busiest, and taking on the idea that less is more. It's now felt like self-care isn't work. I don't have to get out of bed to listen to a meditation. I know how much my skincare routine means to me. There's a lot of planning involved around counterbalancing work with life. It's been a fun challenge."
VA: **Speaking of skincare, talk us through what your routine looks like at the moment.**
YS: "A year ago I would have gone on for 20 minutes. Now, it feels more intuitive. I start with a gentle cleanser – my dermatologist Dr [Pearl] Grimes is incredible – I go between her line or Dr. Barbara Sturm. I love hyaluronic acid and vitamin C, then the Supergoop! sunscreen. Outside of that, nothing beats Aquaphor for your lips. I also really love oil pulling."
VA: **How do you embody the values of Gaultier Divine, a scent that celebrates the power of authenticity?**
YS: "In all of my work, the goal is to figure out how to authentically express myself. It's the idea of using creative spaces to amplify who you are. I love colour because it makes me feel like I can take up more space. Sometimes I love the form of something because it reminds me of a place or person. One thing that was unique about this partnership was the level of creativity. It was beautiful to connect over this message of what it is to be divine and authentically you."
VA: **What do you do to encourage confidence when you find it lacking?**
YS: "So much of it at 23 has been trying to figure out how to minimise how much I care about what people think of me. It's common to distrust compliments and to take criticism seriously. It takes other people who know me to guide me through the anxieties of not feeling confident, and to remind myself that I have a lot to offer. It's a work in progress, but I've gotten better at it."
VA: **How has growing up in the public eye changed your approach to beauty?**
YS: "I've had a complex relationship with beauty. My first understanding came through the beautiful people in my life. I'm grateful my head wasn't filled with examples that didn't look like me. I do remember at the age of 13 on *Black-ish*, I was getting make-up done every day and didn't feel complete without it. So from 16, I was on a very intentional campaign to redefine my perception of beauty. Now I enjoy make-up as an accessory; it can accentuate the features I love."
VA: **What are some of your earliest memories of scent?**
YS: "Growing up in a Black and Iranian household, a lot of scents have to do with food for me. I've always, controversially, wanted room fresheners that smell like salsa, like warm garlic. Things that remind me of a kitchen in use, a home that's being lived in. So I have to say those are some of my first memories of scent. They are like my favourite food dishes. But then I also think things like Persian New Year means that we have hyacinth on what they call a haftsin. I come from cultures that really engage fragrance day-to-day, and I come from a family that's always used essential oils, too. So from a young age, I've used peppermint for energy and different things like that."

Clockwise from top left: DR. BARBARA STURM Cleanser, $94; JEAN PAUL GAULTIER Gaultier Divine EDP, 100ml for $224; LOEWE Tomato Leaves room spray $195; SUPERGOOP! Glowscreen SPF 40 sunscreen, $65.

INTERVIEW: ANGELICA XIDIAS INSTAGRAM: @YARASHAHIDI
ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

VOGUE DIARY

Explore what's in store and worth having this month.

SET THE TONE

When luxury skincare brand La Prairie releases anything limited-edition, we are quick to "add to cart". Housed in an ultra-chic case, the Rituals set contains full and miniature sizes of the essential Skin Caviar Collection creations, making it ideal for both at-home use and travel. As for skincare benefits, expect a more refined skin texture, a reduction in the appearance of fine lines and improved elasticity. Find out more at laprairie.com/en-au/ritual.

GOLD FEVER

There's nothing like a sun-kissed glow for summer, but how to achieve it without UV exposure? Enter Eco Tan's award-winning Face Tan Water for face, neck and décolletage. Easy to add to your everyday skin routine, the lightweight, organic lotion builds a natural-looking tan while also providing anti-acne and hydrating ingredients that are suitable for all skin types. Go to ecotan.com.au.

ON A WING

The enduring enchantment of butterflies is rendered in these exquisite Graff Butterfly Silhouette Drop earrings with wings outstretched. Pavé diamonds trace the outline of the wings and form a second, smaller butterfly motif in the centre of each earring, with a total weight of 0.95 carats. Find out more at kennedy.com.au.

CENTREPIECE

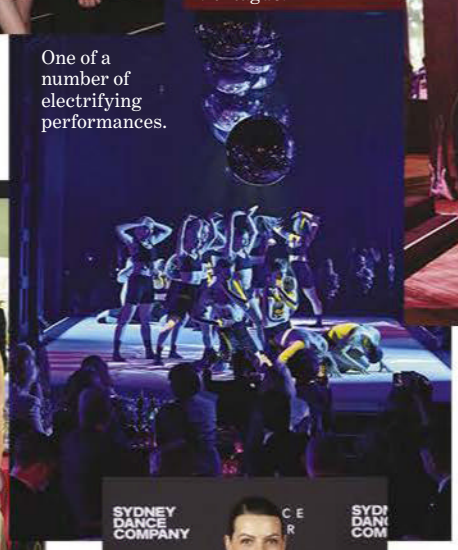
Pandora heralds the launch of Pandora Lab-Grown Diamonds in Australia with three new collections – Infinite, Nova and Era – each with a distinctive style across earrings, rings, bangles and necklaces. Rewriting the rules of the diamond industry, these sustainable and affordable gems allows more people to enjoy wearing diamonds on all occasions. Pictured above, the gold Nova bangle with a central stone designed to appear as if floating midair. Discover the full range at au.pandora.net.

Sydney Dance Company's Rafael Bonachela.

Members of SDC performing on stage.

Vogue Australia's Jessica Montague.

Above, from left: Geoffrey Winters with dancers Emily Seymour and Chloe Young, and guest.



One of a number of electrifying performances.

Senator Sarah Hanson-Young and Ben Oquist.

Bianca Spender.

Above: Janice Petersen (left) and Irene Deutsch. **Below**: Mandy Foley, co-chair, Dance Noir (left) and Sally Burleigh, Dance Noir committee.

Candice Fernandez, La Prairie.

Guests seated for dinner at Pier 2/3.

DON ARNOLD, BELINDA ROLLAND

Let's dance

With "famous", the fun theme of this year's Dance Noir, guests attending the glamours gala fundraiser for Sydney Dance Company went all out with their outfits, either dressing up as a celebrity or appearing red-carpet ready in the spirit of stardom.

Staged waterside at Pier 2/3 in Sydney's Walsh Bay, the lavish dinner was interspersed with live contemporary dance performances that included excerpts from SDC's artistic director Rafael Bonachela's *Impermanence,* among others, an incredible show of talent that held all 450 attendees enthralled.

SBS World News presenter Janice Petersen did an oustanding job as MC, dressed in pieces from Dance Noir's new luxury jewellery partner Fairfax & Roberts, which also contributed exquisite pearl and diamond earrings to the covetable pool of live and silent auction prizes on the night.

The mild spring evening saw a host of well-known faces gather at the harbour, among them, SDC board member Bianca Spender and her siblings who continue the legacy of their late mother Carla Zampatti, a dedicated advocate for the arts. Also in attendance: Malcolm and Lucy Turnbull, Irene Deutsch, managing director Fairfax & Roberts, La Prairie's Candice Fernandez and *Vogue* Australia's Jessica Montague.

After dinner, guests had the chance to show off their own moves on the dance floor as DJ Sveta hit the decks with roaming desserts, cocktails and mocktails fuelling the frivolity.

The new Summer Soirée collection of premium ready-to-pour cocktails by Maybe Sammy Cocktails captures the holiday mood.

SUNSHINE IN A BOTTLE

The return of warm days and balmy nights is cause for celebration. Master mixologists Maybe Sammy Cocktails raise a glass to relaxation with the new Summer Soirée cocktail collection.

LONG DAYS, HIGH SPIRITS, BREEZY POOLSIDE PARTIES, AND THAT UNDENIABLY SPECIAL VIBE

Maybe Sammy Cocktails's new Maybe Margarita, Lychee Martini and Sundown Aperitivo.

MORE THAN A FEELING

Summer's carefree nature – long days, high spirits, breezy poolside parties, and that undeniably special vibe – provided ample inspiration for the new Maybe Sammy Cocktails Summer Soirée Collection. These refined, ready-to-pour additions capture the essence of the season with an original take on three cocktail classics.

MODERN SPIRIT

Maybe Margarita's passionfruit and mango is a sultry twist on a favourite. Subtle lemon myrtle adds whimsy in the elegant Lychee Martini. And native ingredients also shine in the Sundown Aperitivo, where Davidson plum mingles with lemon gin and orange bitters. Whatever summer feels like for you, there's a Maybe Sammy Cocktails moment to match.

VOGUE DIARY

Explore what's in store and worth having this month.

BOX FRESH

Ubiquitous on desks, in cafes and poking out of gym bags, Frank Green reusable bottles and cups are favoured for their bold colours, subtle curves and great proportions. Perfect for the festive season, the brand's Essentials Gift Set contains two of the most popular products in your choice of hues. The set is delivered in a premium box with gift box sleeve and can be customised and monogrammed to suit. Find out more at frankgreen.com.au.

MANE ATTRACTION

Harsh sun, salt water and chlorinated pools can play havoc with our hair in summer. But there is a way to restore dry and brittle locks. Used daily over six weeks, Kérastase's silicone-free Genesis Anti-Breakage Fortifying Hair Serum draws on the restorative powers of Aminexil, edelweiss native cells and ginger root, transforming weak strands into hair that's stronger and fuller. It also works to boost the scalp's natural moisture barrier promoting future growth. Go to kerastase.com.au.

KNIGHT MOVES

Hot off the autumn/winter '23/'24 runway, Burberry's Knight Bag is one of the most covetable pieces of the season. Its slouchy, fold-over style has a casual-chic feel, while the "horse bit" fastener is a nod to the house's Equestrian Knight motif. Worn cross-body or over the shoulder, it's available in three sizes and eight colours and includes a suede option. Visit au.burberry.com.

NICE CURVES

There's something very appealing in the joyful curves and asymmetrical shape of Wanderers Travel Co.'s Susanna bag. As well as being eye-catching, the style lends itself to transitioning easily from clutch to cross-body to suit your mood and the occasion. Made from quality leather and available in six colours, it also features an internal pocket and magnetic closure to keep valuables safe. *Go to wandererstravelco.com.*

Scorpio
24 October-22 November

Feeling directionless? Lean into Saturn as it U-turns out of retrograde to help firm up creative plans and let you get real about romance in time for next month when Venus will magnetise who or what you need your way. You'll be inclined to burn through money as fast as you earn it now, but a Full Moon wake-up call allows you to draw a line under commitments and move on.
STYLE ICON: Mia Goth

Aquarius
21 January-18 February

If your mood dips this month, know that Saturn's got your back with money and self-esteem issues. As Venus opens your world to love, travel and media opportunities, Mars urges you to network to help make a dream come true. Also this month, a New Moon detoxes a career situation and a Full Moon asks what you're prepared to give up so you can have the life you want.
STYLE ICON: Megan Thee Stallion

Taurus
21 April-21 May

After an emotional start to the month, Saturn soon makes you focus on ambitions and collaborations. Venus helps you love yourself more and open up to romance, and a New Moon encourages transparency within professional and personal partnerships. Even so, money or intimacy issues could peak under the Full Moon's beams so use creativity and innovation to find a solution.
STYLE ICON: Gugu Mbatha-Raw

Leo
23 July-23 August

Past hurts could return to haunt you now, but Saturn will help to stop you blurring emotional lines around intimacy and financial commitments. Venus adds charm to communication and Mercury, Mars and your ruler the Sun raise the bar on romance and creativity. As a New Moon eliminates any bad vibes at your place, a Full Moon helps you celebrate (or create) your dream team.
STYLE ICON: Jennifer Lawrence

Sagittarius
23 November-21 December

After processing mixed feelings about intimate and financial entanglements, the cosmos sends you Saturn to set boundaries at home, where emotions and money may feel drained. Venus links friends and ambitions, and you're witty and wild with Mercury and Mars in your sign. A Full Moon headlines sharing the spotlight now, so make room for both you and those close to you to shine.
STYLE ICON: Taylor Swift

Pisces
19 February-20 March

If dreams of picture-perfect romance fall flat this month, Saturn will make you tougher and more focused than you thought possible. Venus adds promise to money and intimacy, with Mercury and Mars placing you centre stage at work now too. As fresh ideas arise via a deep-diving New Moon, a Full Moon says let go of cares *chez vous* as you have bigger adventures to come.
STYLE ICON: Millie Bobby Brown

Gemini
22 May-21 June

Wallowing in money woes is likely now, but Saturn moves out of retrograde in your career zone this month, pushing you to strengthen emotional boundaries and embrace creative money-making. Venus brings love, and your ruler Mercury plus fiery Mars add passion to partnerships. You're an ace multitasker, but a Full Moon in your sign hints at sharing life's heavy lifting.
STYLE ICON: Nicole Kidman

Virgo
24 August-22 September

Comforting friendships may feel like your main goal now, but putting sensible limits on romantic love is the real priority with Saturn out of retrograde. Money flows smoothly, care of Venus, and home is a hub of passion and discussion with your ruler Mercury plus Mars in residence. Under the Full Moon's beams you might take a break or change direction with your career.
STYLE ICON: Stella McCartney

Capricorn
22 December-20 January

A longing for the past could cloud a close partnership now, but Saturn saves you from rose-tinted nostalgia with lessons learned from experience. Work is where you'll feel the love, thanks to Venus, though your true passion may be under wraps – for now. As new friendships and hopes arrive with the New Moon, the Full Moon hints at you first needing a well-earned break.
STYLE ICON: Florence Pugh

Aries
21 March-20 April

November sees you deep in memories linked to home, but Saturn out of retrograde, plus a transformational New Moon, detox the past and put the focus on the future. Love flows with Venus influencing partnerships, and Mercury and Mars push you to speak your mind. As adventures beckon in your zone of media and travel this month, a Full Moon urges you to think big not small.
STYLE ICON: Emma Watson

Cancer
22 June-22 July

Worrying about the way things might have been will get you nowhere fast now, so lean into structure-loving Saturn to see what you can learn and do for your future. Venus helps love and harmony rule at home, while health, work and duty get motivation from Mercury and Mars. To clear your mind of "can't", allow the Full Moon to release jangled emotions and raw memories.
STYLE ICON: Eva Green

Libra
23 September-23 October

You could feel nostalgic about your career this month, but Saturn in your zone of duty and wellbeing brings renewed focus and determination. With Venus in your sign attracting love and money, life feels easier. Your wants and needs are a priority, with Mars and Mercury making you persistent and the Full Moon pushing you towards what's close at hand, not out of reach.
STYLE ICON: Naomi Osaka

ASTROLOGER: STELLA NOVA

Flight of fancy

Dior's Maria Grazia Chiuri is resolute in her mission to uplift women and her belief in beauty, which is why these boots are unapologetically romantic, replete with embroidered fluttering butterflies.

CHRISTIAN DIOR
shoes, P.O.A.

ART DIRECTION ARQUETTE COOKE **STYLING** ISABELLA MAMAS **PHOTOGRAPH** LAUREN BAMFORD

WORDS: ALICE BIRRELL
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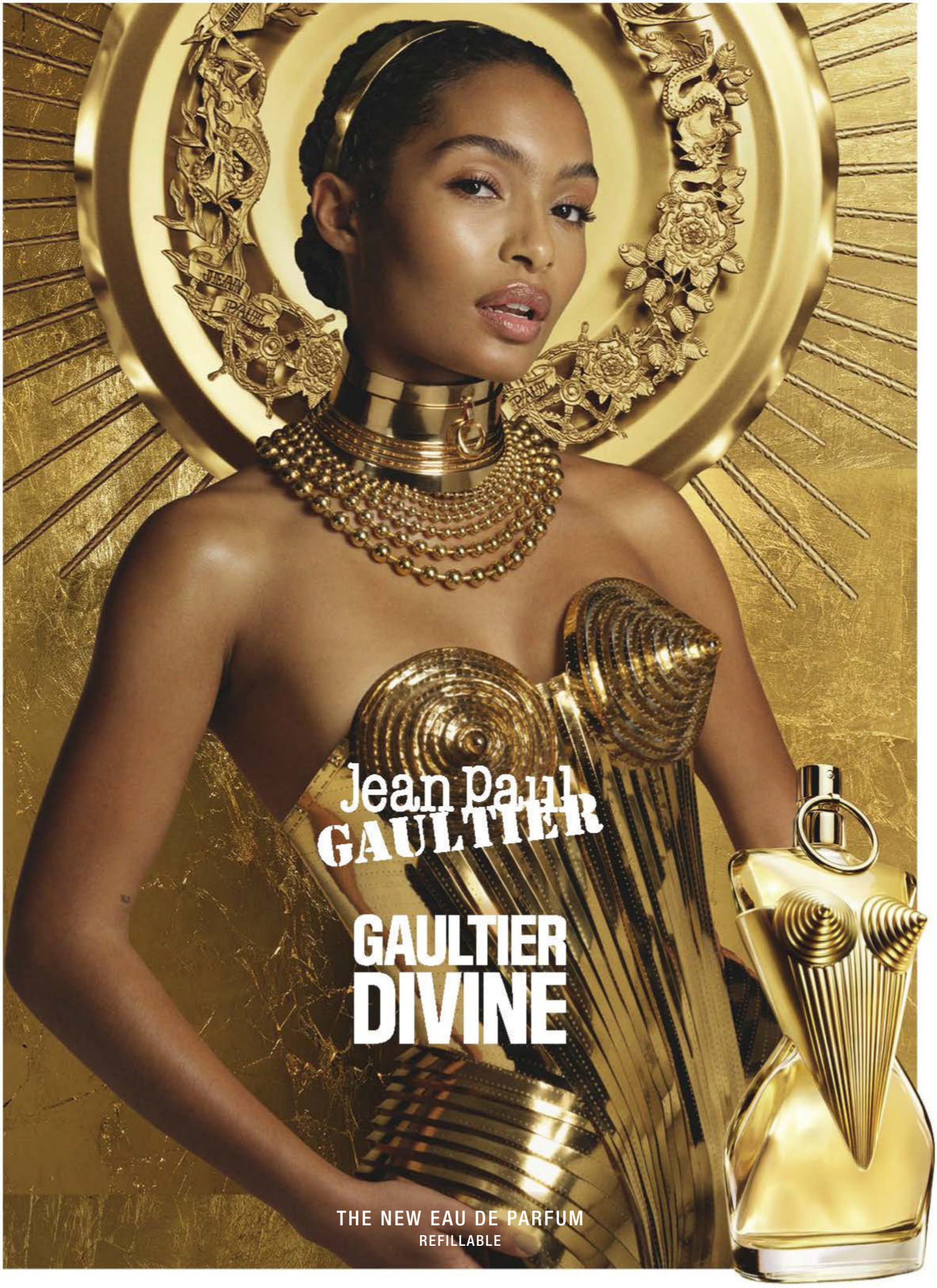
HARDY BROTHERS
CELEBRATING 170 YEARS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